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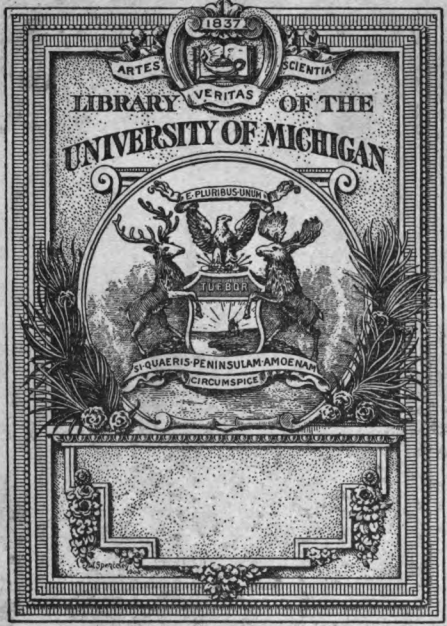

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Red-letter Days of my Life.

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By Mrs. Andrew Crosse,

Author of "Memorials of Andrew Crosse, Electrician."

In Two Volumes.

Vol. I.

London:

Richard Bentley & Son,

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

1892.

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THESE VOLUMES ARE DEDICATED

TO MY DEAR FRIEND

MISS WARRINGTON,

ONE OF THE YOUNGER SURVIVORS OF THE CIRCLE

THAT INCLUDED LANDOR, JOHN KENYON, KINGLAKE,

ANDREW CROSSE, AND MANY OTHERS

MENTIONED IN

THESE RECOLLECTIONS.

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PREFACE.

THE circumstances of my married life brought me into intimate acquaintance with an older generation than my own. Among this older generation were many men and women distinguished in science and literature, people of the highest light and leading in their day. I was an attentive listener to the talk I heard around me, and sometimes I made notes of what was said by such men as Faraday, Babbage, Landor, Murchison, and others.

From my husband, from Mr. Kenyon and his friends, I gleaned many local and

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RED-LETTER DAYS OF MY LIFE.

HOURS COUNTED ON THE SUNDIAL.

It is a glorious drive of twelve miles along the Quantock range westward, from Fyne Court to Alfoxton Park, where the hills dip into the sea. Passing under Cothelstone tower, from whence thirteen

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personal anecdotes of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey in their Quantock days. Some of these recollections have found a place in the chapter on "Thomas Poole." It is, however, to Mrs. Sandford's full and excellent biography of her kinsman that I owe the principal data of my brief record of this good man's life.

I was the fortunate recipient of letters from many of the interesting people named in these volumes; from these treasures I have made such extracts as were not of too personal a nature, but which I deemed would be interesting to the reading public.

As regards the chapters on Dr. Percy and Mr. Knox, I am indebted to their respective families for much useful memorial information. In Mr. Edmund Gosse's very interesting biography of his father, I found materials for the chapter entitled

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"Incidents in the Life of a Naturalist," which materials were furthermore supplemented by unpublished family letters that Mr. Gosse allowed me to read, and in part to use.

The substance of these volumes appeared originally as detached articles in *Temple Bar*, but they have now received a good deal of fresh matter suitable to their more permanent form.

I have attempted throughout to give my readers as much as possible a personal and intimate impression of my friends and acquaintances, and I have also endeavoured to give some idea of the drift of thought and feeling that impelled us onward in the middle decades of our century.

Contemporary records are seldom without some value. I can only hope that what I have here set down in all sincerity

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of purpose may not be found uninteresting to a younger generation, who may care for personal reminiscences of some of those who have passed away before their time, but whose names are on the roll-call of Victorian worthies.

CORNELIA A. H. CROSSE.

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RED-LETTER DAYS OF MY LIFE.

HOURS COUNTED ON THE SUNDIAL.

It is a glorious drive of twelve miles along the Quantock range westward, from Fyne Court to Alfoxton Park, where the hills dip into the sea. Passing under Cothelstone tower, from whence thirteen counties are seen, you must leave the trackless moorland, unless you are fortunate enough to be on horseback, and allow the wheels to sink into the ruts of an ancient bowery lane, which here and there gives you a peep of the "Severne Sea"

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with the fine profile of the Welsh mountains beyond. Presently you descend through "orchard lawns" into Nether Stowey — Coleridge's Stowey. The village has but little charm beyond that of association with the trio of poets and their friend "Tom" Poole. Then, bowling along on a far better road than hitherto, you have three pleasant miles of pastoral scenery, till the sheltering woods of Alfoxton are reached, where Wordsworth sometime dwelt. It was a lovely August day in 1851 when I first made acquaintance with this side of the Quantock Hills. My husband, "Philosopher Crosse," and I were bound on a visit to our friends and neighbours the St. Albyns. Wordsworth had actually been the tenant of our host, though more than half a century had elapsed, but the fact was interesting to me as a link with the very year when the

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"Lyrical Ballads" were given to the prosaic world of the eighteenth century. I bethought me of the time when, as Dorothy Wordsworth says, they lived in "a corner of the house, large enough for ten such families as theirs"—lived merrily in a world that was the poet's own freehold, on an income small, inconceivably small, even for a poet whose achievement is to make, not himself, but the world rich. They were ever thinking the best of their dinner of herbs, served by their one servant-girl, who, fortunately for Coleridge and Cottle, knew how to take off a horse-collar.

"Those recollected hours that have the charm of visionary things" were more present to me than the well-appointed table before me. My host cared no more for poets than did George II., the unfriend of "Boetry and Bainting," but he did say

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that he was "sorry his pig-headed trustees persuaded his mother to give Mr. Wordsworth notice to quit, for he proved himself a careful tenant, and when he left, the house had to stand empty."

The reason why Alfoxton was let arose from the fact that young Grasvenor, as he then was, the son of a deceased Bristol merchant, had rather unexpectedly come into the estate that had belonged to his maternal grandfather, and during the boy's minority, his mother, not wishing to occupy the house, was content that it should be let at a mere nominal rent. Hence the Wordsworth episode.

In later life, Wordsworth was under the impression that he could have remained at Alfox*den*, as he calls it, had he felt inclined; this idea is contrary to Mr. St. Albyn's version of the affair, as told to me. From my point of view, Wordsworth

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and Coleridge planned their German tour, during the spring of 1798, in consequence of the renewal of the lease of the house being definitely refused from the very first. I cannot but think that Wordsworth would have remained on if he could, though very likely he was reconciled to leaving, when the German plan took possession of his mind.

Except that Mr. St. Albyn said when a boy he remembered seeing Wordsworth "mooning about the hills," I did not gather anything of special interest from our host. He pointed out "the tall larch that stands beside our door." In a recent visit to Alfoxton I found that this tree had disappeared, and in "Wordsworth Glen" much ruthless cutting down of timber had disturbed my earlier impression of the sacred spot. On that sunny day, long ago, after our host had shown us

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Simon Lee's cottage by the side of the stream that chattered down from the moorland spring, he left us with grateful minds, that alone we two together might wander where best the "ballads" guided us.

The genius of the place speaks in every line that Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote while on the Quantock side; and what they then wrote contained, I think, the germ of all their after-thoughts—contained the essence of their best. But speaking of the genius of the place, we felt with Coleridge, as we wandered on by mountain, grove, and stream, lovely as it all was—

> "That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
> Their finer influence from the Life within—
> Fair cyphers else."

In the linking together of things, I may say that not long after our visit to Alfoxton, at a morning call at Enmore Castle,

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then in the occupation of Mrs. Trevelyan, I met another survivor of the blossoming time of the three poets. This was Mr. Poole, an old clergyman, first cousin and a somewhat younger contemporary of Tom Poole of classic memory. This good man of "religion" was the very embodiment of Chaucer's "poore parson—rich of holy thought and work," for truly

> "——in his teaching, discreet and benign,
> To drawen folk to heaven, with fairness,
> By good ensample, was his business."

Lord Egmont—the same who often urged upon Coleridge the duty of undertaking some serious work on philosophy—gave John Poole the living of Enmore in 1797, and he survived for several years after 1851, when I met him. As Fuller says of Bishop Joceline—"God to square his undertakings giving him a long life to his large heart." He was the first clergy-

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man in the West of England to establish a village school that should include secular instruction, a plan proving so successful that the example was very generally followed in all the country round, and he became an authority on the subject at home and abroad. We may all remember with what insistence Wordsworth dwells upon the "mighty issues" to be expected from "the faithful care of unambitious schools," and we know it was Coleridge's axiom that, "the most sacred of all property is the property of the poor." Here, then, with such identity of views with regard to the spirit of service, one might have expected that the exemplary young vicar would have been above the prejudices of the Quantock neighbours who "caballed against Wordsworth so long and so loudly." But no, he had not understood the poets in the Stowey days; even

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the lapse of half a century had not removed the warp from his mind: "Yes, they had become very distinguished *since* that time, but Coleridge especially talked sad democratic nonsense formerly, when he used to meet him at Tom Poole's." Not much else in the way of tangible record could I gain from the old man, though he remembered also Charles Lamb being down at Stowey. "It was a time of great political excitement, and, you see, we didn't change our opinions, but they did," said the vicar with a twinkle in his eye, and so the conversation ended.

It chanced that at the same time Lady Trevelyan (Lord Macaulay's sister) was at Enmore Castle, staying with her mother-in-law. I was interested to meet her; she appeared a very clever woman, but rather *précieuse* in manner. I have heard it said that Sir Charles Trevelyan fell in love

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with her, owing to the fact that she could repeat Keble's "Christian Year" from beginning to end. Few people, I believe, possessed the great gift of memory in a higher degree than Mr. Browning. I am reminded of this by what I have been recently told by a friend, who said that, in company with Mr. Browning and Mr. Cotter Morison, they were one day discussing Byron, of whom Browning was an intense admirer. He spoke of Byron's extraordinary powers of satire, and repeated at considerable length a portion of the "Vision of Judgment," beginning with the words, "Saint Peter stood at the Celestial Gate;" when he finished, Mr. Browning said, "I have not repeated those lines for forty years, but they are graven on my memory." Then he burst out with the remark, "Byron was one of the most wonderful men ever created,"

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and turning to his friend, he said, pressing her arm in the way he had when much interested, "To think of all this coming to an end at thirty-seven!" Mr. Cotter Morison agreed that as a satirist Byron was unrivalled, but threw out the query, "Is he a great poet?" Mr. Browning for answer recited with intense feeling those well-known lines—"'Tis well that I should be unmoved," never faltering at a word. Browning asked if they remembered the dedication to "Don Juan," and proceeded to quote from it at some length. He passed on to a criticism of the poem itself, expressing great admiration for the Haidee episode, and the description of Aurora Raby. Some chance remark threw the conversation back to the time of the Elizabethan dramatists, and again Mr. Browning's wonderful powers of memory, and the versatility of his reading, enabled him

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to quote a number of passages familiar only to those who were well read in the period.

It is curious what tricks memory can play. One of that notable group of my husband's schoolfellows, who constituted his intimate circle, was John Eagles, who had perhaps the best and the most *à propos* memory that I ever met with in any man or woman. His scholarly acquirements included an extensive knowledge of the Italian Poets, and when in the mood he would repeat whole passages in the original, or improvise translations from those writers, with singular grace and facility. Mr. Eagles was a writer of verse himself; the following sonnet is a great favourite of mine—

> "O there are passages of life that lie,
> Each like a bright oasis of the heart,
> The wilderness of years, standing apart
> From noted action—daily history;

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Unfelt, unseen, save by the inward eye
That with its sudden vision makes to start
Him whose they are, e'en in the busy mart
Of men, that wonder at his ecstasy.
We are of twofold spirits: and the one
Loves, like the under-current of the sea,
Invisib'e, a diverse course to run;
The other, with necessity its plea,
Commends us outwardly: 'tis thus they give
A world in which we walk—a world in which we live."

It chanced that the writer of the above lines was staying during the autumn of 1851 at Fyne Court with us. One chill October day, when the rest of the party, Mr. Kenyon amongst them, had gone for a walk over Broomfield Hill, Mr. Eagles and I remained behind, preferring to sit by the fire in the music-room, a room large enough to be almost as good as out of doors. Sitting there we talked in leisurely fashion, my guest balancing the poker on his knee, or now and then applying it vigorously to the big logs on the

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hearth, causing them to throw off a merry scintillating shower; while I, when bidden, read aloud passages from my album. Ah, what visions of my girlhood does that old-fashioned word recall? Mr. Eagles had a fancy for hearing me read, and I turned over page after page of poetical extracts; at length I came to his own sonnet, which I began reading, simply observing that it was a special favourite of mine. I saw that he did not recognize it, and pausing, I said, "Have you heard this before?" "Never," was his prompt reply; "but go on, I like it." Coming to the seventh line, I made a mistake—a word had been transcribed in error. "Stop," said Mr. Eagles, "that's wrong—'ev'n in the busy *mart* of men,' not *heart;* why, bless me, they are my own lines," and I was playfully threatened with the poker for so deceiving the poet.

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Mr. Eagles was in the Church, and in his younger days had for a time been curate to Sydney Smith, who most happily characterized him as "a happy union of Dean Swift and Parson Adams." He had much of the Dean's wit, and all the goodness, simplicity, and unworldliness of Fielding's delightful creation of Parson Adams, with a refinement of soul entirely his own. Besides being a High Churchman of the old school, Mr. Eagles was a Tory of the now extinct type. Andrew Crosse was "anti-parsonic and a Liberal to the backbone," to use his own words; he had fought for reform and free trade; he was, moreover, no great reader, preferring to seek the laws of nature by experiment, not like Eagles, living with and loving books and art; yet were these men of diverse mind united in the bonds of enduring friendship. The rancour of

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politics never ruffled an intimacy lasting from their schoolboy days till death. I am led to quote a passage from Jean Paul Richter, describing the reasons of friendship between men of dissimilar minds. He says—

"They had the same contempt for the ennobled childish nonsense of life; the same enmity to the mean—with every indulgence to the little; the same indignation against dishonest selfishness; the same love of laughing in the beautiful madhouse of earth; the same deafness to the voice of the world, but not of honour. Do not inquire too scrupulously why they became attached by such brotherly ties. It is only hatred, not love, that requires explanation."

In one of the many delightful letters I received from Mr. Eagles the following passages occur; he excused himself for

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some delay in answering my last epistle, and then says—

"I go to Hestercombe to-morrow, and mean not to leave the country till I have spent one long day with you and my old friend, Gentleman, Poet, and Philosopher —what would you have him more?—you see how I make amends, appealing to your best feelings and strongest partiality. I have just finished an article (for Blackwood) on the painting the statues, and, I hope, annihilated Mr. Owen Jones, the impertinent coxcomb, who says the Athenians only built with white marble because it was under their feet. He says we must get rid of our unreasonable prejudice in favour of white marble; it has so little beauty that he is quite sure the ancients not only covered it with paint, but with plaster. His pretended evidence is *nil.* I have examined into his authori-

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ties. He brings as much proof as would justify his being tarred and feathered, because there have been people who have been so abused. Now I must not forget to thank you for the quaint verses. What a charm there is in these old things!—antiquity is poetical. Think of a past event long, long ago, and what a dreamy colouring the mind gives it—neither men, women, nor landscape are quite such as we ever saw."

In conversation I remember Mr. Eagles saying, "Women should keep up the enchantment of life; knowledge is but a pawnbroker with a heterogeneous and tatterdemalion storeshop."

A country walk with our friend was the opportunity for many a happy remark and useful suggestion. I remember half apologizing that our gardener had neglected to sweep away the fallen leaves.

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"Pray do not have them touched; these patches of red and orange colour assimilate the ground with the trees above, and in these grey autumn days give the impression of sunshine. I like the wild untouched freedom of this whole valley," he added, "and I delight in your Quantock Hills, because they have no dreary tableland, but are made up of slopes and dips, with wood and water in the ravines. Those Scotch firs that proudly sentinel the hilltop have a gigantic personality about them; I am reminded of Garrick, who used to take off his hat to a magnificent larch in the grounds of a place he visited, saying, 'She was the queen of the woods.'"

When Kenyon and Eagles were present, the conversation had a way of drifting back to books; you must be *alone* with Nature if she is to confide in you. One

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of our party, while we slackened pace on the upward road, expressed an admiration for that fine passage in Beaumont and Fletcher beginning, "Man is his own star," ending—

> "Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
> Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

"But the idea is not new," observed Eagles. "Lucian says our shadows are our accusers." A little later on, in answer to something Kenyon had said, Eagles quoted from Ariosto's "Orlando" a passage curiously applicable to steamboats, "and to go further back," he added, "there is Homer's description of the ships of the Phæacians, in the 'Odyssey.'" Then he mouthed forth the sonorous Greek.

The mention of Homer evoked recollections of their school-days, "hated then and consecrated now," as Andrew Crosse remarked. The trio of old friends had

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been together at Seyer's school at Bristol. "Our master was a ripe scholar, and made scholars," observed Eagles; "I have to thank him for those literary tastes that have been the comfort and pleasure of my life."

Crosse, who was perpetually playing tricks and frightening the small boys with electric shocks, was always called "the wizard," it seems. He was much addicted to making fireworks, and one day, when pursuing the twofold business of learning his Virgil and pounding some rocket mixture, he was discovered by Seyer, who in great wrath carried off the mixture. Crosse watched him put it on the window-sill of a room that was always kept locked. The window was unglazed, but had close iron bars. It was hopeless to think of recovering his rocket mixture, but he was determined that no one else should enjoy

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the spoil, and taking out a burning-glass that he always carried in his pocket, he drew a focus on the gunpowder, which immediately blew up. Kenyon told me this story with great delight, adding, "that in all his experiments Crosse never did anything better."

My husband never quite lost among his rustic neighbours the reputation of dealing with the "Black Art." Once at an election, when he was proposing Mr. Tynte as member for the county, his speech was met with such a storm of hooting and noise from a knot of farmers, that a stranger asked one of them why they were so angry with that gentleman.

"Don't you know?" replied the owner of fat oxen. "Why, that's Crosse of Broomfield, the thunder-and-lightning man. You can't go near his cursed house at

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night without danger of your life. Many folks have seen devils dancing on the wires he's had put round his place."

The tightrope on which Cob, Mob, and Chittibob were alleged to disport themselves, was of course the exploring wire which Mr. Crosse had arranged round the woods with the view of testing the electricity of the atmosphere. In the music-room at Fyne Court there was a battery of fifty Leyden jars, which could be connected at pleasure with the wire, and under certain conditions of the atmosphere these jars could be charged and discharged twenty times in a minute, making a noise like that of a brisk cannonade. A dense fog, or the muffled silence of a snowstorm, would often supply the storage force required for those manifestations of electric intensity. If the receiving balls in the organ gallery were

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left two or three inches apart, the flashing and cracking would often continue with playful intermittence throughout the live-long night. We were never troubled with burglars at Fyne Court! But what was far more interesting than all this playing with electric intensity, were the experiments which my husband was continually carrying on in the perpetual darkness of the "crystal room," or by the laboratory fires. Here the slow and silent processes of Nature were closely imitated, her law of the ceaseless interchange of atoms was noted by the careful observer; and electricity, the agent which lines the fissures of earth with metallic lodes, and sets the form of the leaf, or the facets of the crystal, was here applied with an infinite variety of results. Here in isolated seclusion, in the romantic home of his ancestors, the single-minded student pursued his researches,

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initiating in many cases the very first conception of ideas that in other and more practical hands have had such splendid fruition. In all things poetry winged his thoughts, giving him an insight into the future of his beloved science. How often in these later years, when hearing the last news of some marvellous application of electricity to the uses of life, I have been thrilled with the memory of prophetic words spoken long ago by Andrew Crosse! In his poetic fervour he used to say, "Metaphorically speaking, electricity is the right arm of the Almighty." Science certainly owes much to the divine afflatus of poetry, even when working on the strictest lines of induction. In a letter from Sir Roderick Murchison to myself in 1857, he writes: "What simple and touching verses your husband could indite! Davy always said that he never could

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have been a chemist and philosopher had he not been a poet by *nature*."

The laboratory at Fyne Court was always open to strangers who might feel an interest in the electrical experiments, and from time to time all sorts and conditions of men availed themselves of the privilege. It happened more than once that artisans with a lively interest in science walked from Bristol, before the railway days, to inspect what was being done at Fyne Court in the way of applying electricity to tanning processes, or to see for themselves Mr. Crosse's mode of arresting fermentation in the making of cider. Such visitors were always made as hospitably welcome, and shown everything as freely, as if they had F.R.S. after their names. Occasionally an American would turn up, and once a letter came from the United States addressed, "Andrew Crosse, Elec-

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trician, Quantock Hills, England," which after all was not so surprising as the simple superscription, "siromfredevi, Londra," which duly reached Sir Humphry Davy. We had many American friends, and one summer, having several guests from over the water, we celebrated the fourth of July with all due honours. Mr. Crosse's father had been on intimate terms with Franklin, and also with Priestley, but the fact arose from political sympathy rather than from any identity of taste for natural science, the bent of his mind being purely literary.

Long before my marriage Professor Sedgwick spent a couple of days at Fyne Court, and records having seen "Mr. Crosse's splendid experiments;" and in a letter to Whewell, he writes in his genial way that he had paid a visit to the "lightning-monger." This letter probably induced Whewell, ever greedy of omniscience,

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to penetrate into the wilds of the Quantocks to see for himself what the electrician was doing. Some years later, when I had the pleasure of making Dr. Whewell's acquaintance, he gave me a most amusing account of the difficulties he had in getting to Broomfield. Arriving at Bridgwater by train, he hired a horse at the inn, and taking directions as to the road, set off on what promised to be a pleasant ride of seven miles. But he lost his way in the intricacies of the country lanes, and for a while he could see no one from whom to ask information; at length he spied a rustic, and asked the way to Broomfield. The man, though a native of the hillside, had never heard of the place, but after a good deal of parleying, Hodge exclaimed with a grin, "I'ze warrant ye do waant Squoire Crosse o' Brumwell." On this mutual understanding, Dr. Whewell re-

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ceived fresh directions and went on his way rejoicing; but his troubles were not over, for the wretched hack stumbled and threw his rider prone into a bed of gorse, glorious with blossom and bristling with prickles! I am not prepared to say whether the Master of Trinity expressed himself in the same becoming and reverent language as did Linnæus on beholding gorse for the first time in his life.

Other visitors there were at Broomfield in those years, notably a party of four distinguished men—Dr. Buckland (the then Dean of Westminster), Dr. Daubeny, Lord Playfair,* and Baron Liebig. These gentlemen had been inspecting the cheese-making process at Cheddar, and arriving at Bridgwater ordered a carriage and pair at the hotel, requiring to be driven to Broomfield without loss of time. It was

* Then Dr. Playfair.

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the summer of 1848, the year of revolutions abroad and Chartist alarms at home. The innkeeper, hearing a foreign language spoken, and learning their destination, jumped at the conclusion that these strangers might be plotting mischief against Church and State, and forthwith communicated with the police, with the result that the suspicious quartette were closely watched. When the Dean of Westminster, who dearly loved a joke, heard the story subsequently, he was highly delighted with the impression they had made on the *quidnuncs* of Bridgwater.

The Quantock Hills, with their large extent of trackless moorland and bad roads generally, have never boasted a good visiting neighbourhood, and in Mr. Crosse's time most of the squires belonged to what the late Lord Derby called "the pre-scientific age." Here and there, in

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Bridgwater and Taunton, there were two or three doctors who cared for the science of their profession. At Taunton there was a surgeon by the name of Standert, a clever man, with a remarkably caustic wit. I knew him only in the last year of his life — 1850. He is mentioned in De Morgan's "Life" as being the first person to discover the future professor's great mathematical powers, and to have advised him to follow the bent of his genius rather than enter the medical profession, for which he was utterly unsuited. Sydney Smith was at home on the slopes of the Quantocks, if he could be said to be "at home" anywhere except at a London dinner-party. He had passed away before my time, but the echoes of his wit still resounded locally. He was often at Wilton House, Taunton, and it was at the table of his hostess, Mrs. Kinglake, the

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mother of the historian, that he made the well-known answer, on being asked if —as a neighbouring clergyman had done —he would object to bury a Dissenter. "On the contrary, I should only be too glad to bury them all," was his ready rejoinder. Combe Florey was situated too low down to benefit from the bracing air of the hills, and Sydney Smith, when he came down from London, used to complain of the "demoralizing atmosphere of Somersetshire." One day at the King-lakes', being in the mood of the humorous exaggeration that often characterized his wit, he said, "Yes, I am for increasing the number of the bishops—the islets in the Bristol Channel, the Flat Holm and the Steep Holm should each have its bishop." "Then, at all events, they would all be surrounded by their seas," said Mr. Crosse.

Thackeray came down with his friend

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William Kinglake to pay a visit at Wilton; I have heard that he said afterwards that Mrs. Kinglake and her daughter Sophia were among the cleverest women he had ever met. Those who knew the former were not surprised at the devotion felt for her by her distinguished son. Cold in speech and reserved as he was, he writes of *her* in his book of travels as the source and mainspring of his enthusiasm for Homer, and all that Homer taught.

I knew Mrs. Kinglake first in 1849, the year before I married; she was then nearly, if not quite, eighty years of age, but her powers of mind and her vivacity were unimpaired by time. I think I see her now—she was fairly tall, with a slight and very neat figure that had nothing of the stoop or slowness of age. She was generally dressed in a tight-fitting black satin, scanty in the skirts, the waist rather

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short, with a band and buckle, together with a gold watch and chain of a bygone mode, a small, dainty lace cap tied under the chin with ribbons, and a snow-white kerchief round her neck. Except at dinner, I never saw her without a basket on her arm or by her side, with useful needle-work, mostly mendings, and her house-hold keys. There was an ancient grace and a genuine charm about the dear old lady that makes her a very living memory to me, and, I am sure, to all who knew her. She was kindly and sympathetic, even about one's daily needs and small difficulties. I know she was to me, as a young housekeeper; and yet who could talk so well about men and books and the serious uses of life? When in the mood, she would relate anecdotes of Lady Hester Stanhope, the friend of her girlhood.

When Lady Hester was living with her

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grandmother, Lady Chatham, at Burton Pynsent, the Somersetshire neighbours were scared at her wild freaks of riding young unbroken horses over the country-side. It was in obedience to his mother's wishes that Mr. Kinglake paid his celebrated visit to Lady Hester Stanhope when she had made her home in Syria, and for a time ruled over the tribes of wandering Arabs. The account he gives of this extraordinary woman forms one of the most interesting chapters in "Eöthen." In the conclusion of the letter which Lady Hester wrote to Kinglake respecting the date and manner of his proffered visit, she says, "It will be a great satisfaction to me to have an opportunity of inquiring after your mother, who was a sweet lovely girl when I knew her."

Lady Hester Stanhope died about three years after Kinglake's visit. In a note to his book he says—

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"Our Consul at Beyroot heard she was ill, and rode over the mountains, accompanied by a missionary, to visit her. A profound silence was over all the palace—no one met them. They passed unquestioned through court and gallery till they came to where *she* lay; a corpse was the only inhabitant of Djoun, and the isolation from her kind, which she so long sought, was indeed completed. That morning thirty-seven servants had watched every motion of her eye; that spell once darkened by death, every one fled with the plunder. Not a single thing was left in the room where she lay, except upon her person. At midnight the missionary carried her out into the garden and buried her there. The buildings were fast falling into decay."

This was the end of the fierce, proud, self-exiled woman, of whom Kinglake has left us such a vivid picture.

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How different the death of his own gentle mother, once *her* friend! Mrs. Kinglake passed away in the fulness of years in her home, tended by loving hands, and was laid to her last sleep in one of those sweet, rural churchyards which are a very sanctuary of hallowed rest. This peaceful spot is five miles from Wilton House, and after the simple funeral the family had reassembled there in the old home, now so strangely vacant. When evening came William Kinglake, unobserved by any one, ordered out his horse, and subsequently it became known, though known to very few, that, under the cover of darkness, he galloped back to his mother's grave!

Nearly forty years after this incident Kinglake, writing to his friend Knox, observes, with a touch of feeling rare with him, "The death of a mother has an almost

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magical power of recalling the past—recalling the home of one's childhood and the almost separate world that rests on affection."

* * * * *

It was an axiom with my friend Mrs. Kinglake, that, residing in the country, one should farm land enough "to live on the same." I followed her advice, and took in hand some sixty acres; and I may say that I don't think Mr. Crosse had a tenant on his estate who paid the rent more regularly than I did. I maintain to this day, in spite of an unbelieving younger generation, that I did very well by my farming. I had an excellent factotum who was devoted to our interests, and honest as the day. He knew how to read and write, but beyond this, his mental progress was blocked by "notions"—the mixed result of experience and

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prejudice. Of course they were not all halcyon days; we were so high up on the hills that the spring was often very trying for the fruit trees. On one occasion I asked my man what promise he thought there was for the apples. "Please God," he replied, "we shall have a terrible fine crop, but please Him or no we shall have a goodish lot." The honest fellow intended no irreverence; it was only his way of saying that a certain proportion of the crop was secure against adverse weather. But this is not so good as what our churchwarden said to the archæologists who were looking over Broomfield Church. They asked to whom the church was dedicated. "To Squire Crosse," he promptly answered. Our clerk, who was the meekest man in the parish, always said, when the verse came round, "I am become a lion to my mother's children."

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There had been a temporary arrangement made between our clergyman and a neighbouring curate for an interchange of duties; the clerk startled us by saying aloud from his desk, "This is to give notice that Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Chase will preach here every Sunday to all eternity." In the next parish to ours there was a farmer of a sceptical turn of mind, who was reported not to be a believer in everlasting punishment. After hearing a sermon, in which the preacher dwelt overmuch on realistic detail of fire and brimstone, the driver of fat oxen declared his opinion that what "Parson had said couldn't be true, for no constitootion could stand it."

The parish doctor resided at Bridgwater; the way was long from thence to the lone cottages on our hills, so that it was little short of a necessity that the Manor House should have its dispensary for the poor

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neighbours. The duties of the office generally fell to me, except in serious cases, when I took counsel with my husband. One day a young woman came from a family who were always in trouble, saying, "Pleaäs, marm, father's amoist mazed and muddled wi' the information in his head." She did not mean to infer that her parent had been educated beyond his intellect, as some of us are in these days; she intended to say he had *inflammation*, but really erysipelas in the head. She brought a pint bottle for "a little small drop o' brandy." Brandy was considered a specific in all inflammatory cases. The next applicant, whose husband was "a mere 'nottamy through being so mortal bad with the louisa" (influenza), asked for the same remedy. In some cases of rheumatism, and notably in cases of partial paralysis, Mr. Crosse induced a marked

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restoration of muscular power by electricity.

Notwithstanding the absence of doctors, and the active presence of quacks, our rural population with their *long* families kept in very fair health, and, in spite of excessive cider-drinking, mostly lived far beyond the Psalmist's term of years. As a fact, the parish of Broomfield is noted for the longevity of its inhabitants. An old nurse in the Crosse family lived to be nearly a hundred. She used to say that folks should "take their meals regular." All her life she had eaten "a dew bit, and breakfast, a stay bit, and dinner, a nommet and crummet, and a bit after supper," eight meals in all. Besides this, it was her invariable custom, albeit they were days of black draughts, croton oil, and Epsom salts, to mix together all the doctor's stuff left after any illness in the

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house and swallow it, on the principle that what had cost money should not be wasted.

A pleasant neighbour of ours, a retired army surgeon, who had taken a cottage on the Quantocks, was very much bent on living a good long time. It was a remark of his, "I don't mind your knowing how old I am, but I mind knowing it myself." It was a practice of his to say to himself every morning when he was shaving, "Now, John, you are only twenty-four hours older than you were yesterday, and what you did yesterday you can do to-day." But such aphorisms with regard to longevity, like the "early to bed" rule, temperance, soberness, and all the rest of it, are really no good, unless the individual makes a wise selection of long-lived parents; then will the insurance officer regard him with favour.

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There is always a danger in the country of "rusting out," which is far worse than "wearing out." With a wholesome dread of this dire contingency, we often fled from our rural duties to take a holiday. The special holiday I have in my mind at this moment is a visit to Mr. Yates and his daughter (now Mrs. Bostock) at West Dingle, Liverpool, on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association in 1854. It was my first experience of the Parliament of Philosophy, and though I have attended many of these gatherings since, none have ever seemed to me so brilliant or so delightful.

Amongst other guests at West Dingle were Sir Roderick Murchison, Dr. Whewell, and Mr. Hopkins, the retiring President of the B.A. The house party was always reinforced by several strangers at dinner, sometimes foreign philosophers or

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local celebrities. Our days were devoted to the sections, where, amongst other and varied matters of interest, I specially remember Murchison's observations on the geology of the Hartz and the Thüringerwald. Of still greater interest and importance was Sabine's paper on terrestrial magnetism, a science which the veteran worker has handed on to Rücker and others of our day, who give us the promise of great things. One of the features of the Liverpool meeting was the great battle between Murchison and Sedgwick on the disputed classification of the palæozoic rocks. These distinguished geologists had been like brothers, hammer in hand tramping whole days together over Scotch moors and Welsh hills, and building up slowly, surely, with one mind in harmonious proportion, their common theory of the ancient world. But in the

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end, the "King of the Silures," as Murchison was called, seemed to claim too much for his kingdom under the soil; the ancestral blood of the Dalesman rose in bold Sedgwick's breast, and he on his side claimed the Caradoc sandstone for his own. The divergence of opinion and, alas! the severance of their friendship had been of some standing, but now Sedgwick and his followers had declared open war, and Liverpool was to see the combat. "So all day long the noise of battle rolled" among the sections. In fact, it was not one, but two days, that this Homeric fight continued. Except in his militant character there was nothing of the cleric about grand old Sedgwick. I remember how he stood up that last day denouncing his ancient comrade's geological views, and metaphorically casting about pretty freely "chunks of Old Red Sandstone" at

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every one who differed from him. Sir Andrew (then Professor) Ramsay made an able and vehement defence of Murchison, and later, Edward Forbes, more calm than his elders, made a temperate speech—long remembered, for it was the last time the distinguished naturalist ever spoke in public; he died all too soon for the world a few weeks afterwards. In Forbes's well-reasoned address he tried to show that, after all, the seeming difference of opinion was more a question of nomenclature than anything else. But in truth, though some of the ablest geologists were present, the debate left the matter, in as far as any settlement was concerned, very much where it had been.

In the evening of this same day Sir Roderick Murchison was seated next to me at dinner. It was impossible not to allude to the exciting scenes of the fore-

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noon, and I maladroitly referred to the tag of a compliment to Murchison with which Sedgwick had ended his final speech. "If you call that friendly," said Sir Roderick, with a grim smile, "Sedgwick's friendliness is on the principle that

"'A woman, a spaniel, and a walnut tree—
The more you thrash them the better they be.'"

Dr. Whewell had taken me in to dinner, and in his august presence I thought it discreet to keep clear of the 'ologies; but, with the folly and courage of my age and sex, I actually asked the Master of Trinity if he had read the last new novel. I was confounded—"Of course he had," whole circulating libraries were but as the star-dust in his field of vision; he had the literature of fiction at his fingers'-ends. He told me that such was his liking for Miss Austen that he read her novels through

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once every year. He greatly praised an old novel called "The Favourite of Nature," which I never remember to have heard mentioned by any one else. During a pause in our conversation some one on the opposite side asked him his opinion of a recently published book that had made a considerable stir, called "The Plurality of Worlds." De Morgan said the title should have been "The Singularity of this World," for the idea went to prove that our earth was the only planet in all space that was inhabited. The book in question had been published anonymously, but general rumour attributed the authorship to Whewell, who, however, scrupulously avoided acknowledging it, and replied to the remark of our neighbour as if he were criticizing the work of another person. With the conviction strong upon me that he was the author, the spirit of mischief

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impelled me to say, "But, Dr. Whewell, though you make out that all the other planets are uninhabited, what do you say to the man in the moon?"

"Oh yes," he replied, entering into the joke. "I will leave you the man in the moon; we can all see his face, so there's no denying him." "Let me thank the author of 'The Plurality of Worlds' for this concession," I answered, at the same time adding, "I will promise to keep the man in the moon's secret." Dr. Whewell shook his head at me, but laughed good-humouredly. It was well the pleasantry had not been made by what Kinglake calls "a mere male creature."

A few weeks afterwards my husband received a letter from Mr. Kenyon, in which occurred this paragraph :—

"Now here are some verses for Madame, relating to her friend, the Master of

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Trinity. They were given me a few days since by Forster, roughly put together. I have altered a word or two for the sake of clearness:—

"'Should a man through all space to far galaxies travel,
And of nebulous films the remotest unravel,
He will find, having come thus to fathom infinity,
That the great work of God is the Master of Trinity.'"

I think Kenyon's amendment of Forster's lines was generally adopted, for I have never seen the quatrain in any other form than the above. While on a visit at Cambridge some two or three years after the Liverpool meeting of the British Association, I again saw Dr. Whewell, and I retain a very agreeable recollection of the pleasant hospitalities at The Lodge. The master was on the eve of his marriage to Lady Affleck—the widowed sister of Robert Leslie Ellis,

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whose interesting personality is still remembered, though he passed away before his life's promise had been fulfilled. His amiable sister was one of those who probably would have more than half agreed with Confucius, where he says that the word *kindness* is the summing-up of all morality. It was generally allowed in Cambridge circles that Lady Affleck's influence had a wonderfully softening effect on Dr. Whewell's overbearing manners and temperament. He had won his place by sheer force of intellect, and with his fellow-men he never seemed off guard; with women he could be chivalric, gentle, and kindly. Once I saw this proud don visibly affected by the simple music of a song. I chanced to meet Dr. Whewell at at evening party at Mrs. Drummond's in Hyde Park Gardens; after mutual greetings, he took a seat near mine. There

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was singing, and Miss Dolby gave Kingsley's "Three Fishers;" Hullah had quite recently set the verses to music, and it was new to most of those assembled. The intense pathos of Miss Dolby's rendering of the music tore at one's heart-strings; from the glance I had of Dr. Whewell's powerful, but usually impassive features, I saw that he too was deeply moved.

Dr. Sinker's recently published work on "The Library of Trinity College" recalls to my mind a characteristic anecdote of Whewell. As Dr. Sinker points out, nothing can be more interesting than the associations which cling round this ancient library, where we may handle books that have been read by generations of scholars. "Here Francis Bacon began his course of omnivorous reading. Here are books which influenced the poetry of good George Herbert and of Dryden. In the

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manuscripts are the sermons of Barrow, and such treasures as the correspondence of Sir Isaac Newton."

As the library receives yearly additions, it is possible that some day it may become overcrowded. Dr. Whewell rather troubled himself over the question of space. On one occasion, at a syndicate as I am told, a complaint was made by the librarian that a number of books were carried off from the shelves of the library and never restored. On the question being asked as to what kind of books were taken away, it was elicited that the offenders were country clergymen, who took away volumes of sermons, never returning them. "And a very good thing too—*warthless* sermons," exclaimed Whewell, with the strong Lancashire accent that he fell into when excited.

Those who were intimate both with

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Whewell and with Sedgwick, much regretted that after the former was made Master of Trinity, he should have exercised his authority by vexatiously requiring his old friend to desist from keeping a very favourite dog of his in college. The letters that passed between the two veterans of science on this matter raised a cloud that was never to be quite dissipated. While I was at Cambridge, Professor Sedgwick was kind enough to ask me more than once to evening gatherings at his rooms. He had a loud cheery voice, and delighted in bad puns and still worse riddles. He asked me, "What was the first animal created?" Before I had time to think, he replied, "Why, a chay-hos (chaos) to be sure." Some of his numerous stories were a wee bit broad; at least, they were rather startling when addressed to one's self, but spoken in a

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voice commanding the attention of the whole room.

The personality of Sedgwick was never to be forgotten; the undisguised nature of the man was vehement, genuine, very kindly, and highly explosive. From his talk you had the assurance that he was an enthusiast for the science that had adopted him;* he was a keen observer of Nature, and indefatigable in research, but wanting, I fancy, in that synthetic power which is the chief factor in modern science. Sedgwick did not tell me himself the following incident, but I heard at second-hand, that when La Place was at Cambridge, he enlarged on the honour of Sir Isaac Newton's name being associated with their university. In course of conversation

* Sedgwick was made Professor of Geology because he knew nothing about it; the other candidate knew a good deal, but was all wrong in his theories.

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Sedgwick remarked that for a time Newton's mind was clouded, the result of excessive application. La Place shrugged his shoulders, saying, "*Eh ! Il a écrit sur l'Apocalypse.*"

Sedgwick was a great admirer of Robert Hall, and retained the impression his preaching had made upon him in earlier years. I remember Sedgwick observing that "while listening to his eloquence you felt yourself under the influence and training of a higher nature." I related the following incident, as it was told me by Samuel Warren, who also recollected in his youth having heard Robert Hall, the power of whose oratory he considered perfectly unrivalled by anything else of the kind. Warren's anecdote was, that Irving in the height of his popularity desired very much that Robert Hall should hear him in the pulpit. With some

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difficulty the matter was arranged, because the elder man was so great a sufferer from asthma that he could not remain through a long service without smoking. Irving, anxious to impress his critic, preached one of his most eloquent and impassioned sermons. On asking his friend's opinion afterwards, Robert Hall dryly told him that "he presented a magnificent picture, but stood too much in front of it himself."

It is curious that this remark of Robert Hall's should have been repeated with such manifest appreciation by Warren, for no one stood so much in the forefront as he did, or as he tried to do, projecting the shadow of his intense egotism over all surrounding circumstances. A man of right feeling and conduct as regards the higher moralities, yet was he vain and self-centred to an extraordinary degree for

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one of such undoubted talent. I was told by a friend who was present, that once after dinner, when the wine had been circulating pretty freely, Warren began boasting that his family was Norman and of great antiquity, and that the name had formerly been Varenne. "My dear fellow, we all know that the family of the *Vauriens* came over with the Conqueror, leaving their inheritance of the *Varenne* behind them," said some one present, with a laugh that was contagious.

The same friend told me that it chanced that on his first session, on being made Recorder of Hull, Warren had before him the case of an attorney who was being tried for—forgery, I think it was. Warren, in summing up, addressed him in the following words :—

"Cruel man, why have you pained and distressed *me*, on this my first session, by

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coming before me in the character of a prisoner—you—a member of my own profession—though of course of lower rank—and obliging me to find you guilty—a member, as I say, of my own profession—a profession I have always so greatly honoured." At this, some one in the body of the court called out, "See Quirk, Gammon, and Snap."

The present generation of novel-readers may be oblivious of the fact that this was the style of the firm of rascally attorneys so ably and so mercilessly shown up by Warren in his "Ten Thousand a Year."

I remember dining at the Warrens' when they lived in Manchester Square; there were only two or three strangers present, owing to the circumstance of Mrs. Warren's health not being equal to the fatigue of a dinner-party. Mr. Warren

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furnished his guests with a well-spiced monologue; and when the fact was allowed that he was a one-sided and intensely prejudiced man, his outpourings were very well worth the silence they imposed on others. He showed me the manuscript of his "Diary of a Late Physician," the book which made his literary fame. The manuscript, in its extreme neatness, was almost like copper-plate, with hardly the erasure of a word. Mr. Warren uttered some very happy criticisms on the public men and on the writers of the day, showing thereby great acumen, but no breadth of sympathy. He told me he would never allow any of George Eliot's works to enter the house. On my expressing some surprise, he remarked in his pompous way, "No good thing can come from so impure a source; the waters are tainted at the fountain-head." I am bound to

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say that I do not think his opinion was coloured by any feeling of literary jealousy; he judged Miss Evans as a member of society, rather than as the writer.

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THOMAS POOLE.

No one who desires a perfect knowledge of Coleridge should omit to add this life of Thomas Poole to his library.* "He delivered truths plucked as they were growing with the dew on them," said Coleridge of his friend Poole. This was the poet's intellectual record of the man. In earlier days, when the turmoil of Coleridge's troubled existence was at its full stress, he writes, "Tom Poole has helped me to brave the storm of life's pelting ills."

* "Thomas Poole and his Friends." By Mrs. Henry Sandford. In two volumes. Macmillan and Co., London. 1888.

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This friend, whose head and heart Coleridge eulogizes in no common words, has at last come to have his own story written; and it is a story worth telling and well told. The biographies of the "Lake poets"—of Davy, Charles Lamb, De Quincey, and the Wedgwoods—have already made us familiarly acquainted with the name of Thomas Poole. But it is to Mrs. Sandford's charming volumes that we owe an intimate knowledge of the man as he really was, and of the life he led in that obscure little village in West Somerset, where so many remarkable men gathered round him. Besides the literary interests attaching to his personality, we have in this memoir a picture of the provincial life of England ninety years ago, which is most excellent reading.

Born in 1765, and only dying in 1837, Poole lived to the verge of our locomotive

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age, yet belonged to times remote from our own, because sharply separated by moral and material changes. This remoteness gives a touch of romance to the story of his life.

"Tom" Poole—so his friends called him, and it scores one to the credit of his heart—was born at Nether Stowey, under the shadow of the Quantock Hills. His father, a tanner by trade, had early resolved that his son should follow the same walk in life. Tom's younger brother and his neighbour-cousins were allowed the advantages of good schools, and one of them had a college education, while he was apprenticed to the tanning business, with the bare equipment of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Even arithmetic seemed superfluous to his father's rule of thumb system, for when young Tom suggested an improved method of keeping their

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accounts, the old man replied, "Tut, tut, boy; why, what would you have? I owe no man anything; the pits are full, and there's money in the stocking; what better do you want?"

But Tom wanted a great deal more, both for the conduct of the business, and for the culture of his own mind. He had a hunger for books and learning, and with an assiduity of purpose, which ceased only with his life, he set to work to *improve himself.* After all—the best kind of education! With the help of his cousin John, who became a clergyman, and occasionally with the assistance of a French refugee, he learnt Latin, French, and a little Greek. These bookish tastes were sneered at by his father, who dubbed him "an idle apprentice." Indeed, as time went on, Tom himself felt his ignorance of the practical details of the

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trade; accordingly he formed the resolution of leaving home for a while, and working under a feigned name in some large tan-yard, where he could learn all the newest improvements that had been introduced into the business. That he carried out this intention is a known fact, but there are no records as to time and place. The following incident supplies a link with the period, and is very characteristic of the man. It seems that many years after, when circumstances had brought Poole acquainted with various persons of rank and influence, he was one day walking in the streets of Bath with the Marquis of Lansdowne.

"It so happened that Tom Poole recognized in an old waggoner, driving by with his team, a man who had been carter in the yard where he had worked. He excused himself to Lord Lansdowne, and

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walked across the road, holding out his hand to his old acquaintance. The waggoner stared at him for a moment, and at last seizing the offered hand, he delightedly burst forth—'Sure 'tis never our Tummas! Well, I did always think thee summat above the common.'"

There is a well-founded tradition that the first meeting between Poole and Coleridge took place when they were both in disguise. The story goes that while Coleridge was making strange experiences of life as "Private Comberbatch," he chanced to fall in with the Stowey tanner dressed in the guise of a common workman. They met in the parlour of a wayside inn, and soon fell into conversation over their pipes and beer. Great was their mutual astonishment when each found in the other a person of learning and ability; and so attracted were they towards each

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other, that they swore a fast friendship then and there. If we do not accept this story, the acquaintance was possibly brought about through Southey, though Mrs. Sandford does not suggest it. Certain it is, that when Southey was at Oxford, and Coleridge at Cambridge, they had already come across one another. In a letter to his friend Bedford, Southey describes Coleridge as "a man of most uncommon merit, of the strongest genius, the clearest judgment. My friend he already is, and must hereafter be yours." In August, 1794, we know that Coleridge and Southey were at Bristol together. Here the latter introduced Coleridge to Cottle, the publisher, who proved himself hereafter a useful friend.

Southey had relatives in the Stowey neighbourhood, and his grandfather, a farmer at Lydiard St. Lawrence, was

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very likely known to the Pooles. At all events, we find Southey and his new friend at Tom Poole's immediately after the Bristol visit. Mrs. Sandford is enabled to give the following extract from the diary of the Rev. John Poole, which forms a very curious and characteristic record of Coleridge's *first* visit to Nether Stowey :—

"*August* 18, (1794.)—Rise about eight. After breakfast go to Mr. Lewis's and get the loan of Boswell's 'Life of Johnson' from him. About one o'clock, Thomas Poole, and his brother Richard, Henry Poole, and two young men, friends of his, come in. These two strangers, I understand, had left Cambridge, and had walked nearly all through Wales. One is an undergraduate of Oxford, the other of Cambridge. Each of them was shamefully hot with Democratic rage as regards politics, and both Infidel as to religion.

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I was extremely indignant. At last, however, about two o'clock they all go away. . . . About seven o'clock, Mr. Weekes comes from Stowey; he is very indignant over the odious and detestable ill-feeling of those two young men, whom he had met at Uncle Thomas's. They seem to have shown their sentiments more plainly there than with us. But enough of such matters. . . ."

Tom Poole shared in the democratic opinions of his young friends, but not in their religious views. He describes Coleridge as "a Unitarian if not a Deist," while "Southey, shocking to say in a mere boy as he is, I fear wavers between Deism and Atheism." Poole was already in great disfavour with his neighbours on account of his political sentiments. He confides to his friend Mr. Purkis, in a letter written about this date, that he has been warned

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that Government regards him as a dangerous person, and of whom they are very suspicious, for part of the county of Somerset is known to be disaffected. His friendly informant exhorts him to be cautious, both in speaking and *writing*, for some of his letters have been intercepted. This causes Poole to burst forth with indignation against the "change in the once free Government of England," which, he says, "has now become like a suspicious, secret Italian Republic; seeking to controul the souls of men, as much as if their bodies were in the Bastile."

Purkis was a sympathetic correspondent on the subject of liberal ideas and the necessity of reform. He had himself suffered from the intolerant temper of those opposed to him in politics; for when engaged in getting up the article *Tanning* for the "Encyclopædia Britan-

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nica," Sir Joseph Banks, in the first instance, had refused to allow Mr. Purkis to consult his library of books, considering him a person disaffected to the Government.

Tom Poole's views met also with opposition in the family circle. His cousin Charlotte Poole kept a diary which has been preserved. On one occasion she writes—

"Tom Poole drank tea with us. I wish he would cease to torment us with his democratick sentiments; but he is never happy until the subject of politicks is introduced, and we all differ so much from him, we wish to have no conversation about it."

There is another traditional story about one of the earliest visits of the poets to Stowey, that Mrs. Sandford gives with some reserve.

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The writer has heard the account of the incident in the following terms :—Mr. John Poole is described as returning from a visit to Oxford. His journey on horseback usually took three days, and it was with him the habit, as indeed it was the custom of the time, to turn aside to any friend's house near the road to retail the latest news. He stopped in this way at his uncle's house, and bursting into the parlour where the family were dining, with their guests Coleridge and Southey, he exclaimed, "I bring great news; Robespierre is dead." Whereupon Southey covered his face with his hands, and leaning on the table, cried in strong emotion, "Good God, I would as soon have heard of the death of my own father!" Doubtful as the truth of this somewhat dramatic incident may be, we have on record the eagerness with which Southey wrote his

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"Fall of Robespierre." "I wrote it," he says, "as fast as newspaper matter could be turned into blank verse." Local tradition has also preserved a saying—sometimes attributed to Coleridge, sometimes to Southey—that one of them said "Robespierre was a ministering angel, sent to slay thousands, that he might save millions."

Political differences were getting more and more bitter in the country. Now they would burn the effigy of Tom Paine at Bridgwater on market-day; now they would threaten to smash the carriage of one of the county magistrates, who was known to be a friend of Franklin and of Priestley; another time they were consoled by the town-clerk, sitting behind a table on the Cornhill inscribing their oaths of loyalty to king and constitution.

Tom Poole was made to feel the social

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ban against liberalism in a way that was very galling to him. His only brother had set up as a doctor at Sherborne; and being a quiet, intelligent man, coming with a good introduction, he had been well received by the great man of the neighbourhood, "My Lord Digby."

His lordship had desired the young doctor to dine at the Castle, which was evidently an amazing act of condescension, for "My lord and her ladyship do not visit persons in the town on anything like familiar terms." This unwonted amiability on the part of these exalted personages received a check; for the report reaches them that Richard Poole is "a flaming Democrat." Just Heavens! only think that such a man had dined at my lord's table and spoken in familiar terms to her ladyship. Nothing can save the doctor unless he at once sign "the declaration

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of attachment to the present establishment in Church and State."

It is, I believe, on the tomb of this same Lord Digby that the choice epitaph is inscribed, concluding with these words: "He was kind to his equals, condescending to his inferiors, and his religion was that by law established."

Tom Poole, it must be allowed, could be very vehement at times in his abuse of the "proud aristocracy, creating and patronizing inhuman and unjust wars," as he declared they did. He retained his class prejudices to the last. Even when he was himself a county magistrate, and a man of acknowledged importance in the neighbourhood, he would say in the aggressive tones of his somewhat harsh voice, "I am a plebeian; I am a tanner, you know *I* am a tanner." The wits of Taunton used to call him *Lord Chancellor Hyde.*

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In the early days of the French Revolution, when the Gallic fever was at its height, Tom Poole sometimes let fling grand heroic sentiments, such as the following tremendous protest: "If the whole globe were to fall under the dominion of tyranny, I would cheerfully die to defend the privilege of free speech. In fact," he added, "for these opinions I would willingly go to the Tower."

"To the Tower indeed!" replied Mr. Anstice. "I should think Ilchester gaol would do for you."

It will not be surprising to find Tom Poole, in one of his confidential letters to Purkis, expressing himself as weary of European politics.

"America seems the only asylum of peace and liberty, the only place where the dearest feelings of man are not insulted; in short, the only spot where a

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man, the least human and philosophical, can live happily."

Coleridge had just at this time set afloat his Pantisocratic scheme. Truly things were going on so badly in the old world, that a new version of humanity on the banks of the Susquehanna seemed worth a trial. Poole thinks he will accompany the party—just to watch the experiment, but without joining them. A long letter of Poole's is curious as containing the most complete account we have of the ideal Republic. In the same communication he passes some remarks on Coleridge and Southey, which show how keen was his insight into character, and prove how delicately and surely he could draw the distinction between the gift of genius and the promise of talent.

"Coldridge" (so he spells the name at first), "whom I consider the principal in the

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undertaking, possesses splendid abilities. He speaks with much elegance and energy, and with uncommon facility . . . but he is wanting in those inferior abilities which are necessary to the rational discharge of the common duties of life. . . . Southey is without the splendid abilities of Coldridge, though possessing much information, particularly metaphysical, and is more violent in his principles than even Coldridge himself."

We all know how the Pantisocratic scheme ended, before it had well begun. Coleridge, according to his wont, did little more than talk, as he always talked, with the wildest insistence; but Southey, with whom everything took a practical shape, went so far as to order "two pairs of common blue trowsers for working winter dress, and six brown holland pantaloons."

Notwithstanding that Southey found

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himself with all these nether garments on hand, he it was who first backed out of the affair. Coleridge was deeply offended thereat; so there was a pretty quarrel before the happy family could be brought together for a start.

In 1795 Coleridge married upon nothing but his own good intentions; he hoped somehow to make a hundred and fifty pounds a year! This serious matrimonial commitment gives occasion for a letter from Poole—"chiefly remarkable," observes Mrs. Sandford, "for the ardent expression of faith in Coleridge's powers." It is the first which has been preserved of that long series of affectionate letters which passed between the friends. "A perfect mine of biographical wealth."

His friendship for Coleridge became henceforth, from this time, so entirely the central interest of Poole's life, that to

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understand the one we must follow the story of both. Poole's truly fraternal love of the younger man, who, with all his splendid gifts, so sorely needed a spiritual brother's help and guidance, is wonderfully and touchingly set forth in this correspondence, unique in regard to the relation of the two men towards each other. There is a sentence in one of Coleridge's later letters—a letter written in those dark and evil years, when, as he says himself, he was "almost a paralytic in mind from self-dissatisfaction," which speaks volumes as to all that Poole's friendship was to him. He writes—

"Indeed, indeed I have never been at ease with myself without wishing for a nearer communion with you. For as you were my first friend in the highest sense of the word, so must you for ever be among my very dearest."

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But to return to earlier times. We know how soon the poet's honeymoon at Clevedon, with the pensive Sara, in the cot o'ergrown with white-flower'd jasmine, came to an end. The young couple were without funds, and were forced to return to her mother's small house and sordid surroundings at Bristol. Coleridge was very miserable here; his friends reported him to be visibly drooping. Tom Poole came to the rescue, and invited him to Stowey for a while. "The visit," says Mrs. Sandford, "left a deep impression upon Coleridge's mind—an impression as of a haven of rest and sympathy to which he could not but long to return."

Then we find Coleridge back again in Bristol, trying to keep the wolf from the door with no better weapon than his pen; a hard matter in this well-nigh famine year of 1796. In London the mob were throw-

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ing stones at the king's coach, shouting, "Give us bread, and peace!" In Stowey the Poole family are trying to devise a cheaper loaf by an admixture of barley, beans, and potatoes, and even turnips—anything to lessen the amount of wheaten flour. In Coleridge's household the surplus copies of the ill-starred *Watchman* are being used up for lighting the fires—it was the only remunerative use the *Watchman* had ever been to its luckless author, who was now nearly penniless. But Poole, with equal delicacy and kindness, had got up a testimonial to Coleridge, from his friends and admirers, which took the substantial form of some forty guineas; and this came, as his help always did, in the very nick of time!

Soon after this Coleridge writes to Poole, saying he wants to consult him about divers and sundry plans; and asks

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if he would send "a horse of tolerable meekness" to Bridgwater, where he expects to arrive by the Bristol caravan.

Another fortnight's stay with Poole brings upon Coleridge the conviction that he had better make his home near his friend and counsellor. About this date there is a letter of Poole's, which shows the underlying enthusiasm of his grave and sometimes harsh manner. He says he will stand by Coleridge in sickness and health, in prosperity and misfortune—"nay, in the worst of all misfortunes, in *vice*—if vice could ever taint thee—but *it cannot*."

In some admirable remarks on the spiritual side of Coleridge's nature, Mrs. Sandford points out his marvellous and elevating influence on Poole. It was with his friendship as with his teaching.

"The main tendency of every line is

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to awaken that sense of responsibility to God, and brotherhood with man, which is the master-impulse of activity and service, and no one ever came within the sphere of his influence without being quickened to fresh hope, and as it were new-born to fresh energy."

This, it seems to us, is the key-note of Coleridge's unfading influence, and not all the sneers about his inability "to drive the family cart to market" will move him one jot from the high place he holds as a moralist and as "one of the true sovereigns of English thought."

As we learn in full and interesting details there were many troubles and difficulties, and even differences, between the friends before Coleridge and his family were settled in that Stowey cottage, which he rented at £7 a year. Rather dear at the price, it seems to us, knowing how

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the house stands, mean and unlovely, and prone on the village street. But the place had one recommendation: there was a potato garden and an orchard, stretching away in the rear, towards the back premises of Poole's dwelling. He was in the close neighbourhood of his friend. It is curious that, abstract thinker as he was, Coleridge held to the idea that all mental study should rest upon a basis of manual industry, whereby the necessaries of life should be provided. Nor was this most wise theory of happiness mere theory. He writes to Cottle, that they are settled in the cottage with his friend, Charles Lloyd (who, by the way, lives with him, only that he may hear his marvellous talk of the heavens above, and of the waters under the earth), and they are very happy; he himself very busy raising potatoes and all manner of vege-

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tables. They have pigs, ducks, and geese, but no cow, as they get all the milk they want from the Pooles. His wife, too, is very happy, "for she loves the Pooles, and they love her." It must be remembered that at this time Tom Poole's kind and excellent mother was still living.

It was rather hard upon Coleridge that Charles Lamb writes to ask for some satisfaction respecting his present situation in Stowey. He supposes he has a farm, adding, "and what does your worship know about farming?"

In the summer, Charles Lamb came down himself to see what Stowey really was like, and found there Wordsworth and his "exquisite sister." They were all Coleridge's guests, after a fashion, but it may be concluded that Mrs. Poole's spare rooms were brought into requisition. The ever sacred "lime tree bower" was

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a rough kind of summer-house in Tom Poole's garden. Here, in this "dear arbour! this Elysium," where Coleridge so often repeated his compositions to Poole, were now gathered a goodly company.

The homely supper consisted, on one famous occasion, if not generally, of a large loaf, a hunchet of cheese, and a brown jug of Taunton ale. Cottle was there and has chronicled the fact. What a fine instance of plain living and high thinking! And what glorious *talk* there must have been in those sweet summer evenings, when the last rays of the setting sun pierced the orchard copse in golden bars of flame! There was Charles Lamb, with his "fine Titan head full of dumb eloquence," by the side of Coleridge, whose melodious words reached far realms of thought, ever and again "throwing out

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grand central truths—a truly wonderful man." So said Wordsworth, of the solemn brow and smiling mouth. He also is there, "the giant Wordsworth," as Coleridge calls him, adding these crowning words of praise—"since Milton, no one has *manifested* himself equal to him."

Ever to be remembered in poetic record are those good old Stowey days, with Tom Poole as host and master of the revels, he himself gifted with mental sympathy wide and deep enough to gauge any man's mind. And for local habitation, what more fitting background could the poets have for their meeting-place than the lovely Quantocks? These hills rise behind Stowey and its Castle Mount, stretching away for many a mile of wild moorland, and are withal "tossed together with a frolic surginess" that lends much beauty to the unexpected "burst

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of view." In autumn the smooth and airy heights are richly decked with purple heather and golden gorse, but each season has its own special charm in these remote solitudes. Not inferior, maybe, to the glory of any summer day, was the tender grace of that November time, when Coleridge and the Wordsworths set off over the ridge of Quantocks on their way to Porlock, chanting the rhyme of the "Ancient Mariner" by the way. Those early winter days have a sweet, subtle, and pathetic beauty all their own. The veiled sunlight, the opalescent rift in the cloud, a gleam of gold touching the misty headland, the calm grey sea, with here and there a ripple of silver light, the brightness seen ever in the distance, not of this earth, but beckoning us afar!

The influence of the Quantock scenery may be read in almost every line of Cole-

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ridge's poetry, and in much of Wordsworth's early verse. If the local associations of the poetry are not very obvious to the stranger, they are as landmarks to the dwellers upon Quantock. Who amongst us does not know that thirteen fair counties can be seen from the "ruined tower," where the poet tells the story of his "love" to the guileless Genevieve? And who does not see "in clearer view than any liveliest sight of yesterday," the cheering crowd on Minehead quay, as the mariner's ship dropped out from the harbour under the hill?

The wanderer, who takes for his guide the chattering brook, and climbing the deep-cleft, richly wooded Seven Wells Coombe, or maybe the Hunter's Coombe, finally reaching the summit of the lonely hills, will not marvel that Wordsworth, having felt the charm of the scenery,

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should desire also to make his home in this enchanting neighbourhood. At first, as we know, the Wordsworths had only come on a visit, but, as good luck would have it, Tom Poole found them a house that suited them delightfully. And before the leafy month of June is out, of the year 1797, Wordsworth and his sister are located as tenants for a year at Alfoxton, a spacious country house, with a deer park, three miles from Stowey. When pilgrims come from America to visit the shrine of Wordsworth on the Quantocks, they are surprised that a poet so poor in purse could live in so fine a house; but the fact is the Wordsworths paid only the nominal rent of £23 a year, the place being vacant during the nonage of its owner, young St. Albyn.

Wordsworth always referred to his sojourn at Alfoxton as "a very productive

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period;" and he rightly calls it "Coleridge's blossoming-time." In fact all, or nearly all the poetry Coleridge ever wrote, has Quantock for its birthplace; and it was here that Wordsworth wrote several of his masterpieces, though some were not published till long afterwards. The "Lyrical Ballads" are, of course, associated for ever with this locality.

Mrs. Sandford, ably drawing from her many sources of information, gives us a closer and more intimate view of the "Stowey Fraternity," as they were called in derision, than anything hitherto published. It is Tom Poole's strong individuality helping everybody, and worrying them if they won't be helped, that brings the details of the story into focus. These volumes, however, say but little of Southey's presence at Stowey. There is some ground for believing that the

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intimacy between him and Poole was closer than the memoir would lead us to suppose.

The writer of this article was well acquainted with John Kenyon, who died in 1856; a man of great culture, and known to most of the literary and scientific people of his day. He was one of Southey's greatest friends, also knowing Poole intimately. Mr. Kenyon rented Woodlands for some time, a pretty place between Stowey and Alfoxton. From him I have gleaned many anecdotes of the trio of poets. It was to Kenyon that Southey complained of how "Poole would at times come clodhopping over one's feelings," and that he was never content to be your friend, but he must be your saviour. Certainly I gathered from Mr. Kenyon, that even in the early days, Southey was often at Tom Poole's. There

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is a little story connected with one of these visits that is rather characteristic.

The well-furnished library that De Quincey so greatly extolled, when at Stowey, was a great resource to that most book loving of men, Southey, who, not content with reading all day, had an inveterate habit of reading in bed. This was extremely annoying to Tom Poole when the poet was his guest. After giving Southey a reasonable time for retiring, Poole would steal out of his room just to see if there was any light in the chinks of the door, and great was his wrath if he found his guest had still a light. "Mr. Southey, you are reading in bed again; it is too abominable. I will not leave your door till the light is put out." Of course, for a night or two Southey had to "dout" the candle, as they say in the West; but he bethought himself of an

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expedient. He had previously emptied his water-jug, and when he heard the distant creak of Tom Poole's door, he popped his candle under the jug, and remaining quiet as a mouse had the pleasure of hearing Poole's grunt of satisfaction, and then his retreating footsteps. It must not be forgotten that these were pre-lucifer days, when a light was not easily rekindled.

One of the latest visits that Tom Poole received from any of his old friends, was from Southey in 1837. Andrew Crosse told me of his meeting him on that occasion. There are various records of the visit in Southey's letters, if we remember rightly.

Another trifling anecdote of the Quantock days occurs to me, but this time Coleridge is the hero. Whenever he could borrow a steed of tolerable meek-

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ness, he was fond of making an expedition over the hills to Taunton, where he had, in early days, many friends amongst the Unitarian community. He preached in their chapel more than once, in his blue coat with brass buttons. On one occasion, when riding over the hills, his horse cast a shoe, and he stopped at a village to have it replaced. He chanced to ask the smith what time it was. "I'll tell 'ee present, sir," said the man, lifting a hind foot of the horse, and looking across it attentively added, "half-past eleven." "How do you know?" asked Coleridge. "Do 'ee think as I've shoed hosses all my life and don't know by sign what o'clock it is?" Coleridge went away puzzled; and returning the same way in the evening he offered the blacksmith a shilling to show him how he could tell the time by a horse's hoof. "Just you get off your hoss, sir," said the

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smith, with a twinkle in his eye. "Now do 'ee stoop down and look through the hole in yon pollard ash, and you'll see the church clock."

A very Philistine recollection of Coleridge exists in a letter written by the mother of an old friend of mine. In it she describes having paid a visit in the same house with Coleridge. "He drank up all the brandy in the house, and used up all the snuff in the village," she writes, adding, "I think him a most absent-minded, opinionated man, talking everybody down, and going on about subjects that the rest of the company care nothing for. His conversation is always working, working on, and most fatiguing to listen to."

Poor lady, it is evident she did not understand what Charles Lamb called "Coleridge's fun."

In the Stowey days there was plenty

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of real, honest fun in Coleridge. Wordsworth describes him as "noisy and gamesome as a boy," adding that, when together at Alfoxton, they were "as happy spirits as were ever seen." Mrs. Sandford gives several humorous examples of Coleridge's love of puns and nonsense. There is a punning letter of his, written to young Ward, afterwards Poole's partner, thanking him for mending his pens, which ends thus:—

"Most exquisite *pen*nefactor . . . And may he, great calamist, who shall vili*pend* or derogate from thy *pen*making merits do *pen*ance and suffer *pen*itential *pen*alty, *penn*'d up in some *pen*urious *pen*insula of *pen*al and *pene*trant fire, *pen*sive and *pen*dulous *pen*ding a huge slice of Eternity. . . ."

Each time that Coleridge returns to Stowey, as he did at intervals during the

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ten years subsequent to his departure for Germany, his spirits invariably rise, and he sets to work writing nonsense verses.

"Showing," says Mrs. Sandford, "that the Stowey air had its old power to set him talking nonsense, and poking grotesque fun, just as he used to do."

This time the doggerel verses, in humorous, good-tempered ridicule of Poole's way of walking over the farm, were written on the back of an old letter. Such slight records have their value, showing that in Tom Poole's companionship, poor Coleridge could fling aside the fiend that did plague him so, and be the gamesome boy again, giving himself up to jollity.

But we must return to Wordsworth and Alfoxton. The neighbours had never ceased to regard him with dislike and suspicion, and before long a circumstance occurred that raised the rancour of party

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spirit to a very dangerous point. Thelwall, the well-known Democrat, had come to Stowey to see Coleridge, and they had gone on together to visit Wordsworth. An interesting letter of Thelwall's is given, in which he describes his visit to "this enchanting retreat (the academus of Stowey)," and further describes the philosophizing ramble with the poets through the beautiful grounds of Alfoxton. The local version of his rejoinder to Coleridge varies somewhat from the text. As repeated to me by Mr. Kenyon, it is as follows: Thelwall and Coleridge were together in a lovely and silent spot amid the hills, when the poet is said to have exclaimed, "Citizen John, this is the very place to talk treason in." "Nay, Citizen Samuel, it is the place to make one forget the necessity of treason."

At this time the *Anti-Jacobin* was busy

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with the names of the "Stowey Fraternity," and Gilray had caricatured them. The neighbourhood became alarmed at the nest of Democrats that were sheltering here, and forthwith requested Government to send down a spy. A disappointed candidate at the county election once said that "Somerset was celebrated for the fatness of its cattle, and the folly of its country gentlemen." The wisdom of the latter was certainly not shown in persecuting Wordsworth, and at length driving him from their midst. The trustees of young St. Albyn gave him notice to quit Alfoxton at the expiration of his year's holding. In vain did Tom Poole write a letter testifying to Wordsworth's perfect respectability, "one of his uncles being a Canon of Windsor," and his own conduct and opinions of all men alive the most peaceable. It was all in vain—go he must;

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for in the opinion of the neighbourhood Wordsworth was "a mischievous Democrat and a rank traitor."

In the mean time Thelwall, who had really been the one to upset the fat on the fire, was proposing to take up his abode at Stowey, but Coleridge wrote in the strongest terms, telling him that Poole had incurred great odium for bringing him and Wordsworth to the place, and that if he, Thelwall, came, "dangerous riots might be the consequence."

The halcyon days are over! Henceforth "silent is the harp of Quantock." Wordsworth left Alfoxton just as the "Lyrical Ballads" were passing through the press. Unknown to that blind generation of fat Bœotians, "The ray of a new morning had arisen," but not for them!

Some years later, when Kenyon was

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living in the neighbourhood, he found the bucolic mind still possessed with the most preposterous notions regarding Wordsworth and his sister; there was nothing too bad for the rustics to believe; some of them were rather hazy, however, about the name, whether it was Wordsworth or Wedgwood. "Anyway, they was a bad lot," said an old fellow to Mr. Kenyon, who had been trying to reason him out of his folly. In this very spot the poet, listening to the sweet voice of spring, had said, "Much it grieved my heart to think what man has made of man."

Coleridge had left for Germany with the Wordsworths. He had written to Cottle in July, 1798, saying, "Wordsworth has been caballed against *so long*, and so loudly, that the trustees will not renew the lease of Alfoxton; as my friend is driven out of paradise—as he must

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go—I can and will stay no longer at Stowey."

The correspondence between Coleridge and Poole now becomes extremely interesting. Some of the poet's letters are already known to the world; not so Tom Poole's, which are amongst the best he ever wrote. As Coleridge had left his wife and children in Stowey under Poole's charge, the letters are a mixture of sage counsels, almost aphorisms of wisdom, and such homely details as are never foreign to the human heart. They show the practical character of his sympathy, and the loving-kindness of his nature. Wordsworth said of him that "he weighed the faults of others in the scales of charity."

At the very time that Coleridge quitted Stowey, and left Poole *bitterly regretting* his departure, a new interest grew up for Poole in his friendship for Humphry Davy.

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Southey possibly was the first to make his acquaintance at Dr. Beddoes' house in Clifton. He writes to Coleridge, describing Davy "as the young chemist—the young everything. A first-rate man, conversable on all subjects, and *learnable from.*"

In no instance is Tom Poole's singular power of attracting men of genius to himself more conspicuous than in the case of Davy. From the early Clifton days their intimacy and friendship was unbroken. Not all the attractions of the fashionable world, into which by ill-fortune Davy was thrown, had ever the power of lessening the bonds of friendship between the illustrious philosopher and the Stowey tanner. Coleridge, in his impatience of all conventional habits, might accuse Davy of becoming a "Theomammonist," but he was true to his early friends. Sir Humphry

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Davy's latest visits in England were paid in that unpretending house at Stowey; and it was to Thomas Poole that he dedicated his last work, "The Consolations of Travel."

The following letters from Mr. Poole to my husband show that Sir Humphry Davy would gladly have found a resting-place in his last illness near his friend. Mr. Poole writes:—

"Stowey, November 11, 1827.

"My dear Friend,

"I have heard again from Sir H. Davy. He says, 'I am going to London to-morrow, and after staying two or three days to try a new plan of medical treatment, which my physicians recommend, I shall come westward, and I profit by your kindness and I adopt whichever of the three plans shall promise to be

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most satisfactory. If I take Mr. Crosse's house Lady Davy will come to me. With respect to society, I want only a friend, or one or two persons at most to prevent extreme *solitude*, and I am too weak to hold much conversation, and wholly unfit to receive any but persons with whom I am in the habits of intimacy. I shall not probably be at Stowey before Wednesday or Thursday next. I am upon the *strictest* diet, and a wing of a chicken and a plain rice or bread pudding is the extreme of my gourmandize. God bless you,' etc. Thus for Sir H. I wish he could give a better account of himself. On his arrival you shall hear from me appointing a time when we will call on you at Broomfield. . . ."

In the second letter, dated "Saturday night," Mr. Poole writes :—

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"My dear Friend,

"You have been, I doubt not, expecting to hear from me and Sir H. Davy. He is, I am in hopes, better than when he arrived, but still in a feeble state. We propose doing ourselves the pleasure of calling on you on Monday morning. He is anxious to see you and Broomfield. . . .

"Yours, my dear Crosse, sincerely,

"T. Poole.

"Sir H. desires me to say everything from him."

In Dr. Davy's life of his brother, there is an interesting letter describing this visit to Mr. Crosse's place, written by Mr. Poole to Dr. Davy, expressly for publication. He says, "Sir Humphry was fatigued by the journey; and as we were walking round the house very languidly,

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a door opened and we were in the laboratory. He threw his eyes round the room, which brightened in the action—a glow came over his countenance, and he appeared himself twenty years ago. He was surprised and delighted, and seemed to say, 'This is the beloved theatre of my glory.' I said, 'You are pleased.' He shook his head and smiled."

Amongst Poole's earlier letters, those written from Paris, and addressed to Coleridge, have a special interest. He had gone thither with the crowd of visitors who eagerly sought to make acquaintance with the French capital, now opened to them by the Treaty of Amiens. One day, when in the Louvre, Poole was standing before a striking picture of an albatross, and another gentleman, similarly attracted, uttered aloud, and with emphasis, the words, "He shot the albatross." "Sir,"

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exclaimed Poole, "you are quoting the poem of my dearest friend." "He is a friend of mine too," was the answer; and on exchanging cards, Poole found that his new acquaintance was Sir James Mackintosh.

It appears that Sir James told Poole that the First Consul was holding a levée that same afternoon, and that if he liked he would present him, and presented he accordingly was.

After this we find from Tom Poole's letters that he was in the very midst of the social life of Paris: hearing scientific lectures, and going to "conversations" and other entertainments, where he met with nearly all the celebrities of the day. He passed an "interesting morning with Bernardin de St. Pierre." He sees "Thomas Paine, an original amusing fellow." He meets "Kemble, Lord Hol-

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land, Barthélemy," and others at Miss Helen Marie William's parties. Of Carnot, the ex-Director, he says—

"He is a shrewd-looking fellow. . . . I had some conversation with him, not about war, but about stereotype printing here. Carnot was one of the two who lately had courage to oppose in the Senate Buonaparte's being Consul for life."

In another part of the letter he describes his visit to Versailles—

"I was of course at Trianon, the favourite haunt of poor Marie Antoinette. The people of Versailles weep when they talk of past days. . . . *The King himself* actually used to go to the bedside of the poor of Versailles when they were sick. . . . A man who was one of the guards round the guillotine at the execution of the queen, told me that she rose herself from the *cart* in which she was drawn to execution, and

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mounted the steps of the guillotine as if she was ascending to the throne. She looked round on the palaces which surround the place where she was executed, and submitted herself to death without the least change of countenance. He said she looked thin. Her hair was got grey. But she was beautiful and noble to the last. This is the account of a common soldier. I have heard since I have been here such pictures of the most atrocious crimes, and the most sublime virtues being performed in the same hour, by the same men."

After Poole's return from the Continent, where he had spent six months in profitable travel, we find him in London, together with Coleridge, who, like himself, was there for the purpose of attending Davy's chemical lectures at the Royal Institution.

During the London visit Poole fell in with Mr. Rickman, who was Secretary to

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the Speaker, and well known as the person who conducted the first regular census of Great Britain. "What a *linking*, my dear Col., there is in things!" writes Poole. "It was between you and Southey, I think, that I became known to Rickman." He was already one of "the set." He drops in upon Charles Lamb "just at the *wishing* time of night . . . a fine rattling fellow . . . himself, hugely literate . . . one who thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found." Coleridge calls Rickman "a sterling man," and Southey describes him as possessing the most varied knowledge of any one he had ever known.

Henceforth Rickman and Poole became closely associated together in works of public utility. Poole's most serious thoughts, like those of many other people, had been occupied for some years past by the crying evils of the Poor Law.

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"The smaller ratepayers were crushed under the ever-increasing burden of the rates; the honest labourer was humiliated and degraded; habits of dependence, pauperism, and improvidence were as carefully fostered and encouraged as if these very things were not the fatal seeds of which the natural produce is the ruin of a nation."

To effect some radical change in a system so injurious to the community was Poole's most earnest desire; and when Rickman proposed that he should undertake Government work in connection with this necessary reform, he says, "You will be faithfully labouring in your vocation of amending the Poor Law of England." Rickman offered his friend no reward beyond his expenses; but he did offer him an enlarged field for doing his duty as a citizen. This proves that Rickman

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knew the stuff that Poole was made of—a shrewd and practical trader, but free from all love of greed, a true patriot, with no care or thought of personal distinction.

Passing over several interesting years, when Poole was trying his best to convince people that it was better to pay money in the form of wages rather than of rates, teaching the poor to help themselves by benefit societies, and generally showing by example the value of thrift and good management, we come to 1807.

This was the year when Coleridge paid what turned out to be his *last* visit to "beloved Stowey;" well does he add, "*sanctum et venerabile nomen.*" Here he remained for two months; the first part of the time his family were also Tom Poole's guests. The latter gives a description of Sara, "a sweet little animated fairy,"

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wearing a mob cap, according to the fashion of the day. Coleridge writes—

"I have received such manifest benefit from horse exercise and from total abstinence from spirituous liquors, and by being alone with Poole, and the renewal of old times, by wandering about among my dear old walks of Quantock and Alfoxden, that I have set about composition. . . ."

During Coleridge's temporary absence of a few days, Stowey received a visit from De Quincey, who remained Tom Poole's guest for a short time before following Coleridge to Bridgewater. De Quincey's description of Poole is almost too well known to quote, but the following sentence, or rather part of a sentence, we give, as showing the effect of Poole's character on a perfect stranger—

"Poole was almost an ideal model for a

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useful member of Parliament . . . and he had so entirely dedicated himself to the service of his humble fellow-countrymen . . . that for many miles round he was the general arbiter of their disputes, and the guide and counsellor of their difficulties. . . ."

The writer remembers Mr. Ward having said that "since Poole's death Stowey had suffered a moral earthquake," so greatly was his loss felt.

For thirty years after Coleridge's last visit to Nether Stowey, Tom Poole, or, as he was then called by his poorer neighbours, "Justice Poole," lived on in the old place, pursuing the even tenor of his way. Truly has it been said that "the growing good of the world is largely dependent on unhistoric acts." Fortunately in this instance the "acts," though unhistoric, have not been unrecorded, for in the memoir

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before us the world has gained an admirable example of a really fine character, the character of a man who tried to do his duty in singleness of purpose, desiring no personal distinction; a man who was in all respects worthy to be linked in record with the poets and philosophers who were his life-long friends.

Mrs. Sandford very appropriately closes her interesting life of Thomas Poole with Coleridge's estimate of his "dearest friend," in which he describes him as—

"A man whom I have seen now in his harvest-field, or the market, now in a committee-room with the Rickmans and Ricardos of the age; at another time with Davy, Woolaston, and the Wedgwoods; now with Wordsworth, Southey, and other friends not unheard of in the republic of letters; now in the drawing-rooms of the rich and the noble; and now

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presiding at the annual dinner of a village benefit society; and in each seeming to be in the very place he was intended for, and taking the part to which his tastes, talents, and attainments gave him an admitted right."

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JOHN KENYON AND HIS FRIENDS.

SOUTHEY, in a letter to the Right Hon. C. Wynn, dated January, 1827, says—

"Would you give me your vote and interest for an old friend of mine, who is to be balloted for at the Athenæum—Kenyon is his name—one of the best and pleasantest men whom I have ever known; one whom everybody likes at first sight, and likes better the longer he is known? I have known him three and twenty years, and reckon it what Rogers would call 'a white day' when I fell in with him first."

For thirty years (save one), dating from

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this letter, Mr. Kenyon continued to be a prominent figure in London society, knowing more or less intimately the literary and scientific people of his day. There are frequent records of Kenyon's "delightful breakfasts and dinners" in the biographies of the time; and his surviving friends will remember the social tact he displayed in bringing the right people together. His guests were invited for their own mutual delectation, and not as for a "lion-feeder's" honour and glory.

He always made a point of asking any foreigner, who was also a stranger in London, to a small dinner of three or four, that he might have an opportunity of making intimacies before being launched into general society. At Kenyon's table there was a marked absence of all reviewers or appraisers of literary wares;

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and he was strongly averse from encouraging a "mutual admiration" clique. He had a fine sense of the fitness of things. "I never ask Dickens and Thackeray together now. I did so once, and found it was a mistake," said Kenyon to the writer, adding, with a touch of humour peculiarly his own, "and I do not always ask husband and wife to the same parties. They are addicted to setting each other right about small details, which is very aggravating, and often turns the point of a story. What does it matter whether the Bishop met 'Devil Crosse' and 'Satan Montgomery' at the Browns on Friday, or at the Smiths on Monday? It is enough for us to know that his lordship was in good company."

"The Sydney Smiths" (Kenyon went on to say) "are a couple who ought to be asked together, for she leads up to

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her husband's jokes, and laughs at the right moment. I remember their neighbour Esdaile saying she must have been well beaten before she could have been brought into such good training. But Esdaile had a grudge against Sydney Smith for calling the country gentlemen of Somerset 'the fat Bœotians.'"

It was in this sadly maligned county that Kenyon spent the greater part of his early life. But it was in far other climes where he first saw the light. His father was a wealthy landowner in the parish of Trelawny in Jamaica, and here he had married one of the Cheshire Simpsons. Within sight of the glorious Blue Mountains, and in the midst of all the beauty of tropical vegetation (a joy never quite to be forgotten by the "growing boy"), John Kenyon was born in 1784. He had the misfortune to lose his mother in his

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fifth year. He speaks in one of his poems of—

> "That garden nook, with flowers o'ercrept,
> My mother's grave—the first o'er which I wept
> (For so in that fair isle our 'parted slept)."

John and his youngest brother Edward were sent to England, as children, and the father must have died not long afterwards, for "guardians" only were named at school, where "Kenyon was the richest and the most generous boy amongst us," said Andrew Crosse. The school referred to was the Fort, Bristol, kept by the Rev. Mr. Seyer. It is noteworthy that the group of Kenyon's special schoolmates all severally made their mark later on. Amongst them was William Broderip the naturalist, John Eagles, a well-known contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, and sometime curate to Sydney Smith at Combe Florey. The Honourable Henry

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Addington was also one of the group; and there were two brothers, "capital fellows, Jenkins major and minor," the elder remembered as head of Balliol and Dean of Wells.

Andrew Crosse, another of Kenyon's life-long friends, became well known for his experiments in electro-crystallization. At school his love of science showed itself in divers practical jokes. There lies before me an amusing letter from Mr. Broderip, telling how Crosse made up as a mediæval devil, to scare the weak-minded youngsters, who at the same moment received an electric shock. Something of the wizard's reputation clung to the harmless man of science through life—at least, among his rustic neighbours—hence his friends, in their fun, delighted to call him "Devil Crosse."

The same letter from Broderip describes

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some theatricals given by the boys at the Fort—

"In *George Barnwell* Kenyon was the uncle and Turner was 'Barnwell' himself (Turner became one of the most sanctimonious of men, forbidding all cakes and ale, where he had the chance), and he looked the character. . . . But the best of these pieces was *The Drummer*, in which the acting of Kenyon as 'Vellum,' and the dear Dean (of Wells) as 'Mrs. Abigail,' was admirable."

Yet another of the schoolfellows was Langley St. Albyn; he had no literary gifts, but it was his beautiful place Alfoxton that was let to Wordsworth for a year. And it was during this time, and in this place, as we know, that the "Lyrical Ballads" were composed, rendering the lovely glens of Quantock ever sacred to Coleridge and to Wordsworth.

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In the summer of 1798, when these poems were going through the press, the schoolboys at Seyer's—Kenyon amongst them—were planning a "barring out" with muskets, and the desperate intention of dying at their posts. The plot was discovered before it was ripe for execution, but the absurd thing was that the Irish newspapers got hold of the wrong end of the story, and gave out that the English Government was so unpopular that the Bristol schoolboys were prepared to head a riot of the townspeople.

In consequence of this affair of the barring out, Kenyon was removed to Charterhouse, where he remained for two years. Subsequently, he was entered at Peterhouse, Cambridge, but the choice of the University was unfortunate, as he had no taste for mathematics. As a young fellow, Kenyon seemed to have

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had the power of securing intimacies with older men and with persons of intellectual worth; we may instance his friendship with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey.

At college, a lay Fellow, William Smyth, afterwards Professor of Modern History, was his principal friend and associate. This gentleman had been tutor to Sheridan's son, the young Tom, who was told by his father that he should take a wife, and immediately replied, "Whose wife, sir?" Mr. Smyth's tuition had evidently not resulted in suppressing the family wit.

Kenyon's ample fortune prevented the necessity of his choosing a profession, and the promptings of ambition did not lead him into political life. Under these circumstances it was fortunate that he had refined tastes and a genuine love of culture for its own sake. About this time we

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gather from traditional recollections that both John and Edward Kenyon were frequent visitors at Fyne Court, at Alfoxton, and at other places in the neighbourhood. We get a glimpse of John Kenyon dining with his friend Crosse in his London lodgings, when a gay party were assembled, including Theodore Hook. The bachelor friends—so the story goes—were laughing somewhat noisily over their host's bad carving of a quarter of a lamb, when a jocose passer-by chucked a penny piece through the open window. As the penny fell upon the table, Hook roared out, "Ah, of course, the mint sauce for the lamb."

From Kenyon we had a most amusing account of that well-known audit dinner at Dunster, when Theodore Hook gave one of his very happiest examples of improvisation. He was introduced as a perfect stranger, but Hook had taken

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care to inform himself of the names of a good many of the farmers present, and at the same time gathered up those sly bits of scandal that are always to be found floating in a country neighbourhood. He used his materials with such good effect that he kept the table in a roar of mingled laughter and astonishment. Kenyon described it as a most wonderful instance of ready wit and unerring memory.

Kenyon was very fond of Dunster and Porlock, and was frequently at Nether Stowey, staying with Coleridge's great friend, "Tom" Poole. Here he met Southey, and through him came to know Charles Lamb. There are some published lines of Kenyon's to Lamb with a tributary hamper—

"Elia! Thro' irony of hearts the mender,
May this pig prove like thine own pathos—tender;

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Bear of thy sageness, in its sage the zest;
And quaintly crackle, like the crackling jest;
And—dry without—rich inly—as thy wit,
Be worthy thee—as thou art worthy it."

So well did Kenyon like West Somerset that on his first marriage he rented Woodlands, a small but pretty place between Stowey and Alfoxton, living there some years.

There are traditions that have come down to the writer of how Kenyon and his friend Crosse, though living some miles apart, agreed to ride up, day after day, to Quantock's highest ridge, where they might meet and witness together the glory of the summer sunset.

In 1815 Kenyon left the neighbourhood, going abroad, as so many people were impelled to do, on the Continent being once more open to travellers. There are a few old letters still existing, closely written, sometimes even crossed (to the vexation

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of the reader), addressed to Kenyon by Andrew Crosse. The handwriting of the latter, by-the-by, was likened by Kenyon to the tracings of a spider on paper after a casual bath in an ink-bottle. However, they were frequent correspondents, only one has to regret that Kenyon's letters at this particular period were not preserved. One is tantalized by allusions in Crosse's letters to things and places visited by the traveller, who is now in Switzerland, then in Italy, and again in Paris. It was in Paris, in 1817, that Kenyon first saw Ticknor, and from that time they met whenever the historian of Spanish literature was in Europe, and they corresponded frequently when apart. This intimacy brought Kenyon into contact with many of the most distinguished Americans who visited England. They were sure of a hospitable reception at his house, and

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several of these visitors have recorded their enjoyment of those social functions which brought so many celebrities together. We hear of Coleridge being met at a five o'clock dinner at Kenyon's, and of his talking on till twelve—some one declared he was only in the middle of his second sentence when midnight came. Kenyon with his unfailing kindness had been helpful to the Coleridge family on more than one occasion. Crabb Robinson was so associated with the Lake Poets that probably through them Kenyon must have known him for some time, but the first entry in Robinson's diary, giving the other's name, is under date November, 1820—

"Dined with the Wordsworths, and Lambs, and Mr. Kenyon at Monkhouse's. It was an agreeable company and a good dinner, though I could not help sleeping."

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To the end of his long life, Crabb Robinson had the habit of taking short dog-snoozes during dinner—perhaps his longevity resulted therefrom. He would suddenly awake with a half-guilty start, generally at the sound of a familiar name, and would instantly plunge into the discussion. He was as ugly as Socrates, but his voice was charming; I think I hear his sonorous tones and wave-like musical cadence as he began some happy and pertinent quotation, generally with the words, "It was a fine and wise saying of Wieland," and so on, at first speaking in English and then dropping into the original German if he knew his listeners were acquainted with the language he loved so well. Crabb Robinson was always excusing himself for his bad memory —it was not good, perhaps, for the things of yesterday, but the mental impressions

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of earlier years were indelible, and no man could pour forth such a flood of recollections as he retained of the days he spent at Weimar with Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and Wieland.

In the year 1822 we get the first mention of Kenyon's name in the life of Walter Savage Landor. It appears that Southey had given one of the Hares (I think Augustus) an introduction to Landor, who was then residing in Italy; Kenyon, who had arranged to be his companion, was likewise to have been introduced. He had been some years a widower, and was free to travel where his fancy led him; but on this occasion Landor, who had formed high expectations of meeting Kenyon, was doomed to be disappointed; in fact, it was several years before they became acquainted. The "Hare-brained family," as Southey playfully called the

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four accomplished brothers, were already intimate with the whole coterie of friends, but perhaps (Julius) Archdeacon Hare is the one we hear of most frequently in connection with Kenyon and with Landor. The latter, writing to Southey in the winter of 1823, says—

"The mystery of the missing Mr. Kenyon was cleared up in a letter from Wordsworth. . . . He had, it seems, left Rydal Mount in the previous September with the intention of proceeding directly to Italy, but had changed his purpose and taken a wife."

This lady was a Miss Curteis, a most charming and excellent person. For some years the married couple made their occasional winter home with her brother, a wealthy bachelor residing at 39, Devonshire Place. Mr. and Mrs. Kenyon seemed to love travelling, and were often

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to be heard of in the pleasantest haunts of Italy and Austria. Kenyon's brother had married a German lady, and resided at Vienna, where Ticknor mentions that he visited him. Miss Mitford reports, doubtless with some exaggeration, that "Edward Kenyon lived in Austria on £200 a year, giving away £2000."

I knew Edward Kenyon and his wife, having made their acquaintance in Devonshire Place when they were visiting there, I think in 1851. He had all the large-heartedness of his brother, with perhaps less culture, and certainly with less desire for social interchange of thought. Their home was at Vienna, his wife being an Austrian. They did not join the general stampede of the richer classes who left the capital when the political aspect became threatening in the summer of 1848. My strong impression is that Edward Kenyon

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stayed on through the troubles, that he might help those who needed help. As Sydney Smith said of Leonard Horner, "he had the Ten Commandments written in his face." Edward Kenyon told me many interesting particulars of those anxious days when the Viennese mob were masters of the city. In the October of the same year, when the place was besieged by the imperial troops, more than once bombshells fell in their garden, "and we had to give up taking our coffee on the balcony," said Edward Kenyon in his quiet way.

To return to the elder brother—in 1830 John Kenyon and his wife paid a lengthened visit to Fiesole for the sake of making Walter Savage Landor's acquaintance. Kenyon, with his wide sympathy of heart and mind, understood the inner soul of Landor—understood the true

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loyalty of his spirit, a loyalty not always apparent to the world. He was not to be offended by Landor's prodigious intolerance and occasional unreason; he smiled at the humour of his perverse exaggerations, and delighted in his bursts of explosive fun and laughter. It is needless to say that they became firm friends, and met as often as circumstances permitted.

Landor was very frequently Kenyon's guest in England, before he settled permanently in Bath; and he wrote at his friend's house the best scenes of his "Orestes at Delphos," before breakfast, as he himself said.

Kenyon, writing to Landor shortly after "The Pantameron" appeared, said as follows:—

"I was at Talfourd's yesterday, and was condemned on all sides to listen to your praises. My friend Miss Barrett says of

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'The Pantameron,' that if it were not for the necessity of getting through a book, some of the pages are too delicious to turn over."

In 1833 Kenyon had published a small volume entitled "A Rhymed Plea for Tolerance." Written in what may be termed the pre-scientific age, when tolerance was deemed more a crime than a virtue, the book had its use and purpose, and attracted a favourable notice in the *Edinburgh Review*. The interest of the volume is now only biographical, showing the development of the author's mind, and his truly catholic spirit of charity. Kenyon was very fond of quoting that saying of Coleridge's, "Men may perchance determine what is heresy, but God only can know who is a heretic."

Perhaps a feeling of displeasure with himself for not having done more serious work in life impelled Kenyon to write a

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letter of self-reproach to Southey, which elicited the following reply :—

"Something we must all have to regret. I have done much since you first became acquainted with me, but much less than I hoped to have done. . . . You have chosen rather to enjoy your fortune than to advance it, and with your power of enjoyment I am far from thinking that you have chosen ill. You would neither be a wiser, happier, or better man, if you were sitting on the bench all be-robed and be-wigged as Mr. Justice Kenyon. Nor if you were in the House of Commons, flitting like the bat in the fable between two contending parties. . . . You have seen a great deal of the world, and your recollections and observations, were you to employ yourself in preserving them, might produce something which posterity would not willingly let perish."

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The publication of the "Rhymed Plea for Tolerance" brought about an acquaintance with Miss Mitford, whose "kind and humanizing pen" Kenyon had already seen occasion to admire; but he agreed with Landor in thinking that she was "better and stronger than any of her books."

In Miss Mitford's correspondence there are frequent allusions to "the pleasantest man in London," as she calls Kenyon. In a letter of hers, dated 1847, to Charles Boner, she says—

"The last that I heard of poor Dr. Arnold's family was from a dear friend (John Kenyon) who was visiting Mr. Wordsworth, and he said that he met Mrs. Arnold and her children crossing a field by a country pathway in their deep mourning, and that it impressed him like a village funeral. I don't know whether

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this expression strikes you, but to me it seemed at once a poem and a picture."

In Miss Mitford's "Recollections of a Literary Life," she refers to her friendship with the Kenyons many years earlier than the date of Dr. Arnold's death. She takes occasion to express in graceful terms her obligations to these friends, and her sorrow at the loss of Mrs. Kenyon. This excellent lady died in 1835, to the intense grief of her husband, who during her illness "lay on himself the lowliest duties." They had been married little more than twelve years, "but twelve years of such unclouded happiness as seldom falls to the lot of poor humanity," as Kenyon himself expressed it when speaking in loving reverence of this period of his life. It was through Miss Mitford that Kenyon became acquainted with the Rev. William Harness, himself a conspicuous personage

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in London society for more than half a century.

"My friend William Harness," says Miss Mitford, "has lived with all that was best and highest in art and literature for forty years or more; there is nothing like his dinners for pleasantness and ease. . . . He is the social equal of Mr. Hope, with his £80,000 a year, and Lord Lansdowne, with his prestige of rank, fortune, age, and character. This is much to the honour of London."

It will be remembered that Harness was at school with Byron, who, as the elder of the two, protected the little fellow, then lame and in weak health, from the rough crowd of Harrow boys. The recording angel, one feels sure, has credited Byron's account with those words, "Harness, if any fellow bullies you, tell me, and I'll thrash him if I can."

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In Ticknor's Diary we gather that he "dined very agreeably with my friend Kenyon, meeting Crabb Robinson . . . and Mr. Harness, a popular and fashionable preacher. . . . It was a genuinely English dinner, in good taste, and with all the elegance of wealth, and all the intellectual refinement that belongs to a University man, and one who is accustomed to the best literary society of his country."

On another page Ticknor records a breakfast he himself gave, with Sydney Smith, Kenyon, and Henry Taylor for guests :—

"Sydney Smith was in great spirits, and amused us much with his peculiar humour. Taylor said little, but Kenyon produced quite an impression on Sydney Smith. . . . It was a rare treat."

And again Ticknor writes—

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"Bidden to dine at Kenyon's, specially to meet Dr. Raymond, a Church dignitary . . . and Miss Barrett also there; the dinner was very agreeable—indeed, Kenyon always made his house so, from his own qualities."

At another dinner Ticknor meets Reed, Dyce, H. N. Coleridge, Chorley, the musical critic, and Talfourd. We then come to the description of a breakfast, composed of scientific rather than literary elements:—

"We went to a breakfast at Kenyon's, where we met Davies Gilbert, the former President of the Royal Society, Guillenard, young Southey, and Mr. Andrew Crosse of Somersetshire, who has made so much noise of late with his crystallized minerals formed by galvanic action. . . . Crosse is well worth knowing—a fine, manly, frank fellow, and full of genius and zeal."

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To return to that well-spring of pleasant gossip, Crabb Robinson's Diary, we select a few out of a crowd of entries referring to our friend :—

"A most interesting dinner at Kenyon's. The lion of the party was Daniel Webster, the American lawyer and orator; Mr. and Mrs. Ticknor, Montalembert, Dickens, Wheatstone, the Miss Westons, Lady Mary Shepherd, etc."

Then we hear of Kenyon and Landor breakfasting with Crabb Robinson, and the conversation being so well sustained that they did not separate till half-past two o'clock. Robinson is vexed with himself that he cannot recollect a word of their talk, "which, like water spilled on the ground, cannot be gathered;" yet he adds, "water so spilled often fructifies." This reminds one of the answer that Sydney Smith made when asked to give

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an account of the books he had been reading. "I cannot tell you a thing about them," he said; "neither can I catalogue the legs of mutton that I have eaten, and which have made me the man I am."

Crabb Robinson was on one occasion in some difficulty as to the men he should ask to meet Mr. Faber. It may be remembered that Faber was a "Puseyite" of a very advanced type; he was credited with the belief that burning in this world would save heretics from all fear of fire in the next, and was, therefore, an act of kindness rather than otherwise. How such a fanatic came to be associated with Crabb Robinson, who was considered a sort of *Advocatus Diaboli*, is really very curious; but the latter says, "Faber had great conversational talents, both in polemics and poetry, and was much sought after in society." After some hesitation, Harness,

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Sir Charles Fellows, and Kenyon were bidden to this dinner. Harness's clerical profession suggested him as a suitable guest on the occasion, and, as Robinson said, "He was instructed in the heathen muses, and practised the Christian graces." And he adds—

"Kenyon is a layman whose life is spent in making people happy, and whose orthodoxy is, therefore, a just matter of suspicion; but he has no antipathies to make him insensible to the worth of such a man as Faber."

Forster echoed this view when he said—

"Not without strong opinions himself, Kenyon had that about him which repelled no opinion whatever. He had besides a rare catholicity of taste."

I remember Kenyon's repeating an answer made him by his brother, who, on

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being asked why he was going to Spain, replied, "That I may learn to love so many more millions of my fellow-creatures."

Amongst some of Kenyon's letters now in my possession there is one to Andrew Crosse, dated "Teignmouth, October, 1836." He begins by regretting that he cannot carry out his intention of turning aside at Taunton to visit Fyne Court on his way back to town:—

"I should like to have spent a day or two with you, if only to ask how the baby crystals are growing, and if their limbs and faces are well defined? . . . I stayed three days at Lyme Regis; when I fossilized with that very interesting person Mary Anning (the discoverer of the Saurian remains in the Blue lias of Lyme). She told me something of her history. She was struck, when an infant, by light-

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ning, when her nurse and two other women were killed. Then she was all but drowned. She has supported her mother and her young brother, till he was old enough to do for himself. . . . She has not been very lucky in her finds lately, but the day I was with her she found the jaw of a shark, for which she received five guineas from one of our party. . . . I am glad to say Government have given her an annuity of £30 a year."

Buckland, Conybeare, Sedgwick, and other geologists have made honourable mention of Mary Anning's remarkable "finds." Kenyon declared that she helped to make geology the fashion.

Another letter to the same friend, under date December, 1838, says—

". . . To begin with myself (and every wise man makes himself the centre of a circle three feet in circumference. Falstaff

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has somewhat more). I left London with Southey and some other friends at the end of August. We saw Normandy and its cathedrals, and parish churches like cathedrals, a rich, happy-looking country, and poor, ragged, neglected Brittany. . . . Paris is improved since I last saw it; London looks miserably mean after it—only looks, for, largely considered, it is five times the city in what constitutes the real greatness of cities."

Crabb Robinson, who was one of this travelling party, gives an amusing account of the tour; but the humour had its pathetic side, for the cloud was already shadowing poor Southey's fine intellect. To save him all trouble and worry, the friends, in jest, affected to consider Southey as belonging to a princely family, and distributed amongst themselves Court offices. Kenyon was supposed to be Master of the

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Horse, arranging about hiring carriages, etc.; Captain Jones was Chamberlain, taking rooms and so forth; and Crabb Robinson was Intendant, paying the bills.

Though no man could be more substantially sympathetic than Kenyon, he had the failing of wishing to avoid even the sight of what was painful in life. People are differently constituted, and it was in his line to be responsive to Nature's "heart of May," and to make "the happy happier," as Crabb Robinson said. It has chanced to me very frequently to hear the remark, "Yes, I knew him, and the pleasantest days of my life are connected with Kenyon."

Some such days are still remembered by the survivors of a group of friends who gathered round him on one occasion at Torquay. Walter Savage Landor, Andrew Crosse, Panizzi, and one or two more

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were his guests. Besides, there were others of Kenyon's coterie, who were at Torquay at the time. There was Bezzi, an accomplished Italian, known to the world as the discoverer of Dante's protrait on the whitewashed walls of the Bargello in Florence. There was Zoë King, a niece of Maria Edgeworth, and the intimate friend and cousin of Beddoes—the author of "Death's Jest Book." The life-tragedy of this meteor-like genius was perhaps better known to Zoë King than to any other of his contemporaries. She was the trusted friend of several noteworthy people, being herself gifted with much intellectual sympathy.

Another of Kenyon's friends at Torquay was Eliza Warrington, a connection of the Alfoxton people. She, the youngest, but not the least *spirituelle* of the group, was called by her intimates, "Airy, fairy Lilian."

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Then there was Theodosia Garrow, who afterwards married Adolphus Trollope—she was living at Torquay; in the graceful days of her youth a great favourite with the poets. But the most remarkable person in this brilliant coterie was Kenyon's own cousin, Elizabeth Barrett, destined very shortly to become Robert Browning's wife.

In Landor's "Miscellaneous Poems" there are several that commemorate this meeting of friends at Torquay. There are "Lines" to "Theodosia Garrow," to "Andrew Crosse," and to Kenyon.

Landor invokes the latter by saying—

"So, Kenyon, thou lover of frolic and laughter,
We meet in a place where we never were sad."

He ends up with the lines—

"Puff from before you
The sighs and entreaties that sadden Torquay;
A score may cling round you, and one may adore you;
If so, the more reason to hurry away."

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Landor wanted to be off alone with Kenyon, for a short tour round about Dartmoor, and the lovely Holm Chase; hence his desire to "hurry away."

Kenyon gave me an amusing account of a little incident that occurred during this trip. They stayed a few days at Ashburton, a good centre for excursions. The morning they were to leave, Kenyon heard ominous sounds from the adjoining room, occupied by Landor. The poet was using forcible language, and boots seemed to be flying about. Kenyon knocked at his friend's door, and beheld Landor in a fury over his packing. He was appealing to the pagan gods to tell him why his portmanteau, which three days ago held all his things comfortably, now refused to receive half his belongings! Kenyon quickly undertook to pack for him, when Landor, seeing the recalcitrant boots and

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other *impedimenta* accommodating themselves to prescribed limits, became himself gentle as a lamb. Kenyon was as neat as any woman in everything he did, and took a pleasure at all times in reducing the "general cussedness of things" to order. He did this for many of his friends in the graver affairs of life. While Kenyon packed, Landor sat astride on a chair, with his hands crossed over the back, and philosophized; repeating what he was rather fond of saying—"Yes, I have good health and good spirits; and why shouldn't I? for I have lived simply, and never tried to make a shilling in my life."

Though so different in temperament, these friends suited each other exactly.

"It was not possible to have Landor more at his best than with Kenyon," says Forster in his biography of the former.

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"Sometimes Landor would defend to the death some indefensible position, assail with prodigious vigour an imaginary enemy, or blow himself and his adversary together into the air with the explosion of a joke—then the radiant glee of Kenyon was a thing not to be forgotten."

Among the travelling Americans who brought introductions to Kenyon, and were hospitably received by him, was Miss Sedgwick. This lady was fortunate in seeing a great deal of pleasant society of the best sort during her London visit; but, without any discretionary reticence, she set about writing a book. In the letters of Mrs. Browning to (Orion) Horne there is a very amusing reference to this matter—

"(Miss Barrett writes in 1841). Have you seen Miss Sedgwick's book, and heard the great tempest it has stirred up and

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around you in London? . . . My friend and cousin, Mr. Kenyon, admitted to be one of the most brilliant conversers in London, fell upon the proof-sheets accidentally, and finding them sown thick with personalities side by side with praises of his own agreeable wit, took courage and a pen and 'cleansed the premises.' For my part, strongly as I feel the saliency of Miss Sedgwick's faults (it struck repeatedly and ungratefully upon some who had bestowed cordial and sisterly attention upon her) . . . I am not quite clear about Mr. Kenyon's right; the act was *un peu fort* in its heroism."

Meanwhile Kenyon had written to America to explain "the moral right" he had to do this deed; and as no breach of friendship resulted, the lady, without doubt, felt that he had proved himself not only her friend but her saviour.

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The first meeting of Kenyon and Mr. Browning was very characteristic of the former. It seems that the poet found himself accosted at a dinner-party by a handsome elderly gentleman, who asked him if he was the son of Mr. Browning of So-and-so, identifying his name and residence. Browning said he was, and then Kenyon told him that he had been at school with his father, and that they had been very intimate in those days, though they had lost sight of each other since. He went on to describe how as boys together they had been fired with the ambition to realize Homeric combats, and got swords and shields, and hacked away at one another lustily, exciting themselves to battle by the insulting speeches extracted from the original.*

* The writer is indebted to Mr. Dykes Campbell for this interesting anecdote.

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It is interesting to note that in Mr. Browning's last volume—in a poem on the development of his own mind—he describes his father teaching the five-year-old child something of the siege of Troy:

> "He piled up chairs and tables for a town,
> Set me atop for Priam, called our cat
> Helen, enticed away from home (he said)
> By wicked Paris"—

and so on. To the boy's "huge delight" he was taught "who was who, and what was what."

From the time that Kenyon discovered in the author of "Paracelsus" the son of his old schoolfellow, "he never ceased," said Mr. Browning, "to shower kindnesses of all sorts upon me."

The intimacy was further cemented when Mr. Browning married Kenyon's cousin, Elizabeth Barrett. In after years,

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they generally made their home under Kenyon's roof, either in Devonshire Place, or at Wimbledon, whenever they came over from Italy to England. Mrs. Browning gracefully speaks of this hospitality, in her dedication of "Aurora Leigh" to Mr. Kenyon; and further enlarges on the support she has received from his belief in her, and sympathy with her, in her various efforts in literature, and steps in life "far beyond the common uses of mere relationship."

But this is to anticipate. Eleven years before the publication of "Aurora Leigh," Mr. Browning had dedicated a volume of his poems to the same good friend. In later editions, these poems were redistributed, but Mr. Browning always referred to the fact that some of the pieces had first been inscribed to his "dear friend John Kenyon," adding that he hopes "the

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whole may obtain the honour of an association with his memory."

When the Brownings were living in Florence, Kenyon had begged them to procure for him a copy of the portrait in the Pitti, of Andrea del Sarto and his wife. Mr. Browning was unable to get the copy made, with any promise of satisfaction, and so—wrote the exquisite poem of Andrea del Sarto — and sent it to Kenyon! No mean compensation for the doubtful copy of what some art critics declare is a doubtful picture, both as to the authenticity of the portraiture and the painter's name!

By the death and under the will of his brother-in-law, Mr. Curteis, John Kenyon came into a large accession of fortune—not less, in fact, than £100,000. This amount was reduced by Kenyon's generosity to certain distant relations of the

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deceased, who considered themselves aggrieved by being passed over. He inquired what had been their expectations, and on learning the amounts, transmitted the same in cheques, by return of post. Kenyon was now enabled to extend his sphere of charities; to do this wisely and with the greatest benefit to the recipients, became part of the business of his life. He employed almoners (principally ladies) in different places to inquire into cases of distress and to report to him. Amongst other things, he sent £10 annually to all the police offices in London; but I do not think his name figured conspicuously in ordinary subscription lists. He used to say, "I am not rich enough to give in a hurry." He was one day showing me some chairs and cushions covered with the Berlin needlework fashionable at the time. "These things were done for me

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by some poor ladies, whom I wished to assist. I was puzzled about the value of such work, so I asked them to make a calculation of how many stitches they could do in an hour, and then I knew what I ought to pay them."

The "joy-dispensing Kenyon" proved the kindest of friends to me, in those early days of my married life, when society in London had much of the zest of novelty. The summer days at his pretty little place at Wimbledon, the dinners at Richmond, the Sunday afternoons at the Zoological Gardens, where one met everybody, and the entertainments in Devonshire Place are never to be forgotten. Sir Charles and Lady Lyell, the Brownings, Babbage, the Longmans, Sir Charles and Lady Eastlake, Macready, and surviving members of the Wordsworth and Coleridge families are

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amongst the names that recur to me as fellow-guests.

Speaking of Macready, he mentions Kenyon's parties several times in his diary, with always a pleasant word or two about his host. On his last visit to London—it was in 1851—he writes:

"*March* 11.—Dined with Kenyon, who, against my urgent request, had a party. Count Strzelecki, Abbot Lawrence, Booth (of the Board of Trade), Sir George Back, Procter, Dr. Bright, F. Goldsmid, and Forster."

Amongst the guests at Kenyon's table whose personality struck me the most were Walter Savage Landor and Babbage. The latter was very interesting, though an egotistical talker, but few had so good a self to talk about. To my regret, he no longer gave those "Saturday evenings" which had been so fashionable a few years

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before. One of three qualifications were necessary for those who sought to be invited—intellect, beauty, or rank. Without one of these, you might be rich as Crœsus, and yet be told, you cannot enter here. I remember his telling me that, as long ago as 1839, he had foretold that steamers would go to America in seven days. His calculating machine was an endless subject of monologue. It is a curious fact that I once learnt, not many years ago, from an old man who had been a boy at the same class with him at Dartmouth, that "Babbage was the stupidest boy in the whole school in arithmetic." I asked if he remembered anything remarkable about the great calculator in his boyhood. "No, nothing—we used to call him 'Barley Cabbage,' and he didn't like it." Babbage was very fond of talking of Byron's daughter: to him she was

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always "Ada," for he had carried her in his arms as a child, and he was her friend and counsellor when she was Lady Lovelace. Kenyon had met her at Fyne Court, where she was a frequent guest, being intensely interested in Mr. Crosse's electrical experiments. Kenyon acknowledged Lady Lovelace to be a woman of remarkable intellect, but she was too mathematical for his taste. "Our family are an alternate stratification of poetry and mathematics," Lady Lovelace used to say.

Babbage thought that if he was blind, he could write poetry, "and I should take for my subject the description of an intellectual Inferno," he said. It was difficult to associate poetry in any form with Babbage—he was so eminently practical. He told me that he never allowed himself to lose any time. "Before setting out for

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a walk in the London streets, or a drive in an omnibus, I give myself certain problems to think out."

He even calculated the effect of imagination in self-delusion. He found himself away from home without his nightcap; he felt certain of catching cold—when happily he bethought himself of tying a piece of string round his head, as a make-believe nightcap. It was quite successful, and he slept without feeling chilly. Babbage said he had told this story to Rogers, who *capped* it. (Kenyon shook his head at the pun, for he affected to despise them.) Rogers declared he had caught a cold through a trick of his imagination. He thought he had been sitting with an open window behind him, at a luncheon-party at Lady Cork's in New Burlington Street, and was in consequence seized with a violent fit of sneezing and all the sensa-

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tions of catarrh; but he discovered that the window was of plate-glass and perfectly shut.

> "Imagination plies her dangerous art,
> And pours it all upon the peccant part."

Kenyon was frequently Rogers's guest; but he complained that latterly his celebrated breakfast-parties were too crowded to be pleasant. Rogers's old butler tried to lessen this mistake; on letting out any visitors he used to ask them point-blank if his master had invited them to breakfast. If the answer was "Yes, on such and such a day," then the old man would consult his slate, and as likely as not shake his head, saying, "We are quite full, sir, on Wednesday, but master will be very pleased to see you on Friday morning."

I remember one of Kenyon's old servants asking him if the Captain Cook

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who had married Mrs. Browning's sister was the same gentleman who had sailed round the world! It was the rarest thing for Kenyon and any of his domestics to part company. On engaging servants, he always asked them if they had made inquiries about *his* character—and if they were satisfied.

Mrs. Procter, in a very amusing way, told me, at Kenyon's table, the incident of a rebuff she had received from Rogers. She, by chance, remarked to him that some neighbours of theirs had set up a carriage and pair, adding, "I wonder if they have come into any money—do you know, Mr. Rogers?" "No, Mrs. Procter, I am not in the habit of inquiring into my neighbours' affairs; but if you like I will send in my servant, with Mr. Rogers's compliments and Mrs. Procter's compliments, to ask if they have had an acces-

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sion of fortune that would justify their setting up a carriage."

Kenyon told me that in his caustic way Rogers used to say, "God sends sons, but the devil sends nephews"—a remark not called forth by his own circumstances, for, as a fact, Rogers's nephews were most amiable men and very attentive to their uncle.

Mrs. Procter was a very vivacious talker, in every way a great contrast to her extremely silent husband; she could be very trenchant and sarcastic in her remarks. I do not know why, but she and Crabb Robinson did not love one another. I think she once told him, or repeated what some one else had said, "that he need not talk for a lifetime of having once spent a fortnight at Weimar with Goethe and Schiller." Crabb Robinson, generally so kindly in speech, made

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the following remark one day to me: "If any one escapes eternal punishment in the next world, it should be Procter." "Why?" I demanded in surprise. "Oh, because he has had punishment enough in this world, in living so many years with Mrs. Procter!"

I feel sure the poet would never have claimed exemption on such a score, for I believe they were a very devoted couple.

There was no one more free than Kenyon from the laments of age. As he himself said, in youth he was inclined to sentimentalize over every sad "*Memento mori*," but as years advanced his motto was "*Memento vivere.*" In one of his own verses he says—

> "If Time may something take away,
> He yet hath more to leave behind."

Nor when he had attained his grand climacteric could it be said that his

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intellectual account was closed. On the contrary, he was in distinct sympathy with the younger generation who were pressing forward, as youth ever does press forward, to become the teachers of their age.

Latest among the several visits that Mr. Kenyon paid us at Fyne Court, I recall a delightful week, when Mr. Eagles was also our guest, and we had expected Landor. Instead of his cheery, wit-provoking presence, there came a letter from him, full of explosives—he was furious at being laid up with the whooping-cough, a complaint he had had, and hoped he had done with, seventy-two years before!

We all regretted Landor's absence, but Eagles—he, who had been likened to a fine mixture of Swift and Parson Adams—helped to console us. Never was man more quick in repartee, or more ready in quotation, and then his stores of know-

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ledge were encyclopædic. But, ye gods, he was a punster, and at times, when at his very worst, even Kenyon was betrayed into "inextinguishable laughter."

> "When thou thro' every fytte,
> Dear Aquilius! hast been running,
> Wisdom—poetry—and wit,
> Then dost drop to sheerest punning."

These were the concluding lines of some verses of humorous expostulation that Kenyon addressed to his old schoolfellow.

Eagles made us laugh one morning by reading aloud a letter lately received from his farm bailiff. It had been a very rainy season, and the man gave a doleful account of everything. The hay spoilt, meadows under water, the sheep with the foot-rot—in fact, he wound up by saying, "'Tis wet everywhere—nothing but wet —except the cow, and she's dry!"

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In another letter—this was from a London correspondent of Mr. Eagles'—the writer described how that Hyde Park was a Slough of Despond, owing to the continual rain, and told that the Duke of Lucca, riding across it the other day, was thrown from his horse, into the mud; some one seeing his bespattered condition, called out, "Filthy Lucca" (lucre).

"Talking of matter in the wrong place," said the host, "I must tell you what befell our Welsh housemaid. You know that I have up there in the organ-gallery an apparatus arranged for testing the electricity of the atmosphere. It is connected with exploring wires, carried on high poles for more than a mile round the woods. I have had '*Noli me tangere*' engraved on the brass receiving cylinder, to warn off intruders; and in plain English our servants are told on no account to touch the

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apparatus. But the other day the housemaid, noticing that the cylinder was very dusty, and being over-zealous in her vocation, rubbed it vigorously, and in doing so got a smart electric shock. She came complaining to me, in her strong Welsh accent, that the nasty thing in the music-gallery had nearly knocked her down. 'I told you not to touch it,' said I. 'Yes, sir, but I thought you'd wrote, "No tanger on it."'"

"Oh, now do tell the story of the old gentleman and the Leyden jars," said the best listener of the party, edging in a word.

"Well, it is only this," said Crosse. "A party of strangers came the other day, curious to see my electrical arrangements. One of them looked very much askance at my two enormous Leyden jars, when I mentioned that in certain states

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of the atmosphere I could charge them with electricity from the clouds. The old gentleman turned to me, and gravely said, 'Don't you think, Mr. Crosse, it is rather impious to bottle the lightning?' 'And don't you think, sir,' I replied, 'that it might be considered rather impious to bottle the rain-water?"

This opened a discussion on tolerance, or rather the want of it, and Kenyon's poem was quoted where he says—

> "—Leave polemic folios in their dust;—
> But this point hold, howe'er each sect may brawl,
> Where pure the life, where free the heart from gall,
> Whate'er the creed, Heaven looks with love on all."

In response to the sentiment expressed in these lines—which, by the way, treads too closely on the heels of Pope's "graceless zealots"—Crosse said that a tenant of his, a stranger to the county, made a curious remark to him the other day.

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They were crossing a field, while discussing the bad effects of religious differences; when the farmer, raising his index finger, said, "My belief is that there are as many ways to heaven as there are blades of grass in this field pointing upwards."

Thus we chatted on, till the well-piled wood fires had smouldered into dull redness, the candles in their sconces burned blue, as though a cold breath had dimmed them, and mysterious shadows crept out of the corners stealing around. Then another mood fell upon us—we talked of modern thought, of its assumed omniscience; and Kenyon quoted Julius Hare's saying, "Man's first word is Yes; his second, No; his third and last, Yes." We agreed that, all said and done, we are in truth "still moving about in worlds not realized." We have, despite all the

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gains of science, our moments of blank misgivings, and the mind in its own place is ever subject to those "obstinate questionings, before which our mortal nature trembles."

"I have often thought," said Andrew Crosse, "that this world is a place of punishment, where we are called upon to suffer for sins committed in some former state. But we know nothing of the past —of the present—of the future—except relatively; we can only pray."

It was in the moment of thoughtful silence following these remarks that an incident occurred which was singularly startling and impressive. There came upon us a sudden flash of light, illuminating the whole large room by the intensity of the blaze; this was accompanied by a sharp cracking detonation. The light and sound proceeded from the organ-

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gallery; but before we had time to say, "What is it?" there came another blinding flash and deafening crack; a few seconds of darkness, then another and another. For several minutes we were spell-bound; then, more reassured, we watched the magnificent display, till at length the intermittent discharges grew weaker, came only at longer intervals, and after a time all was hushed. Meanwhile Mr. Crosse had thrown open one of the windows to look out upon the night. Snowflakes were falling from out the darkness above —falling softly through the still air, on a white muffled world. In the utter silence of the solemn night came no sound or sign that Nature's great factor was at work; but the same electricity that, under other conditions, crowns the dead thistle with its diadem of crystals, brought to us its message both visibly and audibly.

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The explanation of the incident was really very simple: the receiving balls connected with the exploring wires had been accidentally left about seven inches apart—hence the flash that would otherwise have passed away noiselessly. The curious thing was that we had had our mimic thunderstorm, though the outer world gave no appearance of electrical disturbance.

Our revels now were ended, the pleasant days were over. Happily from us was hidden the book of fate; for, as a fact, this was the last meeting of the old schoolfellows under the Magician's roof! Within two years of this time they had all passed away—Crosse, Eagles, and then Kenyon!

Crabb Robinson was the first to inform me of our dear friend's illness. He had called, and "found Miss Bayley in tears,

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considering Kenyon's case hopeless." Procter and Hawthorne were there, and Kenyon spoke almost as usual—anxious and thoughtful for others. The illness lasted several months, but "the scene-shifter Death"—as Coleridge calls our surest friend—came at length, on the 6th of December, 1856.

His brother Edward had died a fortnight before his own release, and in consequence John Kenyon made important changes in his will. The last days of his life were devoted to dictating fresh codicils; and "with generous and discriminating kindness, he divided his large fortune amongst his friends." There were no less than ninety legatees and annuitants named in this remarkable will.

"This is indeed a sad grief," writes Walter Savage Landor to Forster; "Kenyon was the kindest and most genial of

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friends ever known to me. I never saw a cloud upon his face. There was not a word he uttered, not a letter he wrote, that did not carry on its surface some ray of light from the happiness he was spreading around him."

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WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

THE following undated letter belongs to the autumn of 1850, a time ever memorable to me, because I had then recently settled down to new interests in the romantic home of my happy married life. This playful rejoinder to a letter of mine was the first I had ever received from Walter Landor, who, be it remembered, was already in his seventy-sixth year.

"DEAR MRS. CROSSE,

"No visit in this world or from another could give me greater pleasure than that which you promise me

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on Monday, the 14th. Come early; time is precious to me, especially *such* time. Can you dine at the old-fashioned hour of three? I enjoy the feast of reason; but the feast of nonsense and *abandon* is a better thing. If you do not keep your husband in order, I shall perhaps tempt him into a little of his epicurism. Talk of Plato! the fellow is what Carlyle would call a sham and humbug. For dialogue and for style, too, Crosse, I venture to affirm, prefers Galileo.

"Ever truly yours,

"W. S. LANDOR."

It became our custom when we visited Bath to stay at an hotel, for we had many friends to see in the neighbourhood; but we invariably devoted our first afternoon to the three-o'clock dinner with Mr. Landor — a sort of institution, in fact,

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which afforded me some of the most interesting recollections of my life.

On the occasion of our first visit, it was a bright sunny day, and we found our host awaiting our arrival in the drawing-room of his lodgings, No. 3, Rivers Street. The cloth was already laid on the round table; it was his only sitting-room—he lived very simply; but he was his own caterer, and knew how to provide a good and hospitable dinner. The aspect of the old-fashioned house and its locality suggested the Bath of Sheridan's time. Landor himself was a link with the remote past, for he knew the place in the last decade of the eighteenth century.

I never saw a room so full of pictures as this drawing-room; even the doors, inside and out, were hung with framed oil-paintings, all and each of which their owner believed to be veritable "old

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masters," but I am afraid his faith was not shared by his friends. A shelf by the side of the fireplace contained the few books that Landor cared to possess—he was no book collector. That massive brow of his was a library in itself; at first sight the high and at the same time retreating forehead seemed to require a taller, larger figure, but this impression wore off, and the charm of his smile made him appear a handsome, noble-looking old man. His eyes varied in expression more than any eyes I ever remember. Sometimes his soul looked out of them with a far-away sadness that was infinitely pathetic; and then they might be seen flashing with exuberant boyish fun, such fun as could only be felt by people of abounding life and good animal spirits. I often wished, when Landor set off laughing, that the room was ten times as

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large, especially if his pet dog Pomero barked in chorus. The two together were very noisy indeed.

After sitting an hour or two with Landor, you would forget that he was the old man; he was such stirring company, and at all times there was so much suggestiveness in his talk. His memory, when first I knew him, was never at fault for a name or an illustration. He was not much given to quotation, but often he flashed out a criticism that was very amusing. In speaking of Gray's Elegy, he observed, "It was a mistake to say, 'The moping owl doth to the moon complain;' the owl is not moping, she is about her business catching mice." He objected also to what he called the "tin kettle of an epitaph tied to the tail of the Elegy." I forget the name, but he compared certain incongruities of a writer to

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being served with "goose and mince-pie on the same plate." He objected to all that savoured of vulgarity in expression. "Milton," he said, "should not have described the scale that 'kicked the beam.' We might as well expect to hear the angels talk of 'kicking the bucket.'"

In theory, though certainly not in temper, Landor was a Republican, but a Republican of the seventeenth century. In politics he was a staunch Protestant; and I think he would have agreed with Kinglake in saying that if "Hampden had been a good Roman Catholic, he would just have paid his ship-money." There was no submission to the self-constituted "Right Divine" doctrine about Landor or his writings; there was the true Englishman's love of liberty in all he spoke or wrote. For him, the poet and philosopher

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must above all be, as he said, "the warders of civilization, the watchmen at the gate which Tyranny would batter down, the healers of those wounds which she left festering on the field."

I well remember a fine burst of Landor's eloquence in favour of republican institutions; and when especially praising the Americans, amongst whom he had many friends, he concluded with the remark, "But I could never live in America, because they have no cathedrals or painted glass."

Landor loved Art, as he himself says, "next to Nature;" his long residence in Italy had habituated him to the presence of artistic surroundings; but his truest and tenderest feelings were ever for the woods and fields. His knowledge of Nature's minutiæ was very remarkable. The ways of birds and other creatures

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were familiar to him through the magic of friendliness; and flowers he loved as if they were sentient beings. In writing of one of the many solitary interludes of his life, he says—

> "The flowers my guests, the birds my pensioners,
> Books my companions, and but few beside."

Landor had all the vigour of an open-air mind. I have heard him say repeatedly that he considered "those hours ill spent that were not passed out of doors." He always dwelt upon this with insistence. "Thoughts came to him," he said, "in the open air or in the silence of the night; exercise is not always necessary, but the mind wants field repose and *growing* weather; neither storm nor sunshine, but calm." Landor had a dislike to flowers being gathered; he says in one of his poems, "I never pluck the rose." I remember his saying with some warmth,

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almost anger, that flowers should not be disturbed; he liked, he said, to go year after year to the same spot in the garden, as to the hedgerows of the fields, and look for the self-same flowers in each returning spring. There are some exquisite lines in which he says—

> "—Sweet scents
> Are the swift vehicles of still sweeter thoughts,
> And nurse and pillow the dull memory
> That would let drop without them her best stores.
> They bring me tales of youth and tones of love,
> And 'tis and ever was my wish and way
> To let all flowers live freely, and all die
> (Whene'er their genius bids their souls depart)
> Among their kindred in their native place."

Landor would occasionally fall into silence, and his thoughts apparently wandering far away, perhaps into his own or the world's past, his companions cared not to recall him to the trivial present by any uttered word. I remember his breaking such a suggestive silence by suddenly

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exclaiming, "Yes, the time I most regret is the time I have spent in reading; if I had read less, I should be more original; learning in books is learning at second hand." Then he went on to tell us that only during four years of his life had he ever studied seriously. This seemed really surprising when one considers the extensive range of knowledge that is brought under view in the "Imaginary Conversations." I suppose I expressed this in some way, for Landor replied, "A deep insight into your own mind gives you a knowledge of other men's."

Something just then turned the conversation into a less serious vein, and Landor went off into one of those bursts of exaggerated nonsense that always proved irresistibly contagious. Such a moment of general hilarity was Pomero's opportunity, and he barked and capered

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round, thoroughly enjoying the joke in his doggy fashion.

These interludes of fun and frolic on the part of the poet-philosopher were very characteristic of his individuality. My husband and Kenyon were congenial spirits, and in their presence, more especially, he indulged in the spontaneous gaiety of his nature. Landor would fire off his paradoxes in most amusing fashion, defending his proposition at first with judicial gravity, and then upsetting his own contention with the explosion of a joke. I remember his propounding one day the statement that "fiction was more true than fact." He defended the idea with great ingenuity. He could be very happy at times in repartee. I recollect his handing me once at dinner a glass of wine that was brimful; he did it with a certainty of nerve that led me to say,

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"You are as steady, Mr. Landor, as if you were only eighteen!"

"I am a great deal steadier than I was at eighteen," he replied, with a laugh.

Landor had his pet aversions—Lord Brougham was one; his style he compared to the "music of a bagpipe; his vivacity being expressed by twitches of sarcasm," adding, that "the vintage of his intellect had produced a bin of flat ginger-beer."

Professional literature was an abomination to Landor; at least, he said so in his exaggerated way. It is a remark of his, that "authors should never be seen by authors, and little by other people." He would occasionally lump all current literature together without discrimination, and abuse it heartily. He seemed to read very few books, but he knew by intuition the tendency of modern thought.

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He also recognized, with loudly expressed reprobation, the change that was coming over the popular taste of the day—the love of sensationalism.

"People now want strong essences instead of flowers," he said. "They disregard the old grove and the soft meadow; they conjure tears by bullying and blaspheming; and, with the air of what passes for originality, they are ready to kick the first honest shepherd they meet, and shake hands with the first cut-throat."

Sometimes, in the quiet evenings we spent at Landor's lodgings in Bath, he would be in the humour for recalling personal recollections. I remember his telling me that he was the first man in Oxford to leave off hair-powder and a pigtail, and was stigmatized as "a Jacobin" in consequence; this was in 1793. He said he soon found that Oxford could teach

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him nothing that he wanted to know. But I suspect he came to this conclusion as an after-thought. As we are aware, his college career terminated abruptly, by his being rusticated for a foolish practical joke, which would have been condoned but for his proud defiance of the authorities. Curious that a man who could be so calmly judicious, when removed to the realms of contemplative and critical literature, could be so wanting "in the sense that handles daily life." In temperament he fell under the too frequently preferred charge, that genius is shadowed in its earthly path by inherent irresponsibility. All the archangels that we meet here below are, like poor Coleridge, damaged more or less, be their gravestones ever so laudatory.

Landor's domestic unhappiness was too well known to be ignored; and I have

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heard him refer to the circumstance occasionally, but I never knew him utter a word of blame. He said merely, that "life was rendered impossible to him in Italy." I have heard him regret, when contrasting other and more congenial marriages, that he "unfortunately was taken by a pretty face."

Kenyon related to me an incident in the Landor honeymoon that is significant. On one occasion, it seems, the newly married couple were sitting side by side. Landor was reading some of his own verses to his bride—and who could read more exquisitely?—when all at once the lady, releasing herself from his arm, jumped up, saying, "Oh, do stop, Walter; there's that dear delightful Punch performing in the street. I must look out of the window." Exit poetry for ever!

Landor gave me a characteristic account

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of his parting from his family. "There was no quarrel," he said, but he had resolved in his own mind to leave his home. The evening before, it seems, he had said, "Mrs. Landor, will you allow me the use of your carriage to-morrow morning to take me the first stage out of Florence?" The request was accorded; no further words passed between this ill-sorted couple, "and so the next day I left for ever," said Landor.

Alas! we know that at the end of his life, driven by a calamity which, unhappily, he had himself evoked, he once again tried the experiment of living at Fiesole, but with disastrous results. The story goes that a fortnight after Landor's return to his family in 1858, he again showed the irascibility of his temper, by kicking his dinner and the man-cook out of the window. Probably they were both bad—

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the dinner must have been exceptionally so—for Landor was very simple in his tastes, and easily satisfied. He lived for twenty years in the same lodgings in Bath, without suggesting the rapid exit of any of the servants from his presence. In all the pleasant hours, first and last, that we spent in the society of the kindly old man, I never saw any exhibition of temper. Once we tried his patience in a small matter. My sister and I were inexcusably late for dinner; but he received us without a word of reproach. It is true that he had eaten his own meal, for which act he most courteously begged our forgiveness, saying he had made it a rule in life never to wait dinner for any one. With more thoughtfulness than menkind generally have, and more than we deserved, he had taken care that the dishes should reappear nice and hot and in every way comfortable.

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I had known Landor six years, and was on terms of intimacy, so that the exhibition of a little human nature—if not Landorian explosiveness — would have been excusable on the occasion.

There were few things that Landor more frequently insisted on than the axiom, that "hatred is the most vulgar of vulgarisms." In poetry he has well expressed this feeling, where he says—

> "I never hate;
> It is too troublesome: it rumples sleep,
> It settles on the dishes of the feast,
> It bites the fruit, it dips into the wine;
> Then rather let my enemy hate me
> Than I hate him."

In his lofty way Landor used to say, "I do not remember that resentment has ever made me commit an injustice." In money matters he was most liberal to his family. He gave up nearly three-quarters of his income to them; living, he told us,

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on £350 a year in Bath. They had, besides, the profitable estate and villa at Fiesole.

Apropos of not resenting injuries, Landor related to me the following incident in his most characteristic manner. He resided for three years of his early married life at Como, where he had for his next-door neighbour the Princess of Wales, and, as a matter of common scandal, knew the rumours that were circulated concerning her mode of life. Before long, a violent dispute arose between their respective servants, regarding a right of way across Landor's garden. "The insolence of her domestics," said Landor, "was only equalled by the intolerable discourtesy of her Royal Highness when she was appealed to in the matter." In short, there was a pretty quarrel, and Landor was not the man to suffer a wrong

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in silence, especially from Royalties, respectable or otherwise!

When the Milan Commission was carrying on the "delicate investigation" some years later, Landor found himself applied to confidentially to give evidence *against* Queen Caroline. This raised his indignation, and he told me that he replied in these words: "Her Royal Highness is my enemy; she has deeply injured me, therefore I can say nothing against her, and I never will."

It was rather a significant circumstance that, shortly before this application was made, George IV. took an opportunity of asking Mr. Landor to dinner. "I declined the honour," said Landor, "on the plea that I had an attack of quinsy. I always have quinsy when Royal people ask me to dinner," he added, laughing immoderately.

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In that treasured little packet which I possess, docketed "Letters from Walter Savage Landor, 1850–1858," I find that, though always winged with kindly sympathy, yet, from their brevity and personal allusions, they yield few extracts of any general interest. In a letter to my husband in the spring of 1851, he writes—

"DEAR CROSSE,

"Let me thank you for your spirited lines, and rejoice in your perfect happiness. In return for your poem, I can only send you the one I wrote last. Next week another will appear in the *Examiner* more worthy of your notice, because it refers to the greatest and purest of all public men, your countryman and neighbour Blake."

Landor had been my husband's guest

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at Fyne Court, the ancestral home of the Crosses, on the Quantock Hills; and there he had seen some of those remarkable *early* experiments in electricity which for some years gave a peculiar interest to the secluded old manor house in the wilds of Somersetshire.

In those leisure moments which were not exclusively devoted to scientific pursuits, Andrew Crosse was known to indulge in occasional flights into the region of poetic verse. Some of these fugitives pieces Landor had greatly admired, and hence the "Lines to Andrew Crosse," which commencing thus, fall later into a less happy strain of criticism:

"Altho' with earth and heaven you deal,
As equal and without appeal,
And bring beneath your ancient roof
Records of all they do, and proof;
No right have you, sequester'd Crosse,
To make the Muses weep your loss.

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A poet were you long before
Gems from the struggling air you tore,
And bade the far-off flashes play
About your woods and light your way."

Landor was not altogether consistent in his criticism of Wordsworth. In some lines following those quoted above, when alluding to the dearth of poetry, he says—

"Southey, the pure of soul, is mute;
Hoarse whistles Wordsworth's watery flute,
Which mourn'd with loud, malignant strains
The famisht Black in Corsic chains."

I remember that Landor instanced Wordsworth's sonnet to *Toussaint l'Ouverture* as one of the noblest in our language since Milton, praising it to exaggeration. At the same time, he was impatient with much that Wordsworth wrote, calling it "verbose"—adding the justly severe remark that "he pursues his thoughts too far, and considers more how he may show

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them entirely, than how he may show them advantageously. Good men may utter whatever comes uppermost; good poets may not." In Landor's "Imaginary Conversation between Southey and Porson," he relentlessly pursues Wordsworth in his uninspired moments, and such moments we must allow he had; possibly a deficient sense of humour often prevented him from recognizing his own lower level of thought. Landor, on his side, was without the reverent spirituality that was the very essence of Wordworth's genius. It revealed something of Landor's mind that he objected to his brother-poet because "he was like an organ that had no trumpet stop."

The following letter from Landor refers to an article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, of January, 1853, by our friend the Rev. John Eagles, describing a visit he had

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recently paid us in the country. Landor writes—

"DEAR MRS. CROSSE,

"How can I express to you my delight at the letter you have written me! Eagles, if never before, is now an inspired poet, and if I am able to stir out I will go to the reading-room to look at *Blackwood.* It is scarcely thrice in a year that I turn over any article in a periodical. I know nothing of the *Leader.* Soon after its establishment, I gave a paper to my friend Miss Lynn, which the *Leader* was disinclined to insert, objecting to some of the opinions it contained. The *Examiner* is the only paper I ever write in, or ever will. . . . Alas! my dear kind friend, in a very few days I shall enter my seventy-ninth year. Your commands ought always to be obeyed; but there is a commander-

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in-chief who may direct my march to other quarters than the pleasant ones at Fyne Court. Old Time rattles his sands in my ear, and when I would turn away he shows me his scythe. Greatly do I doubt whether I shall ever move again from Bath. . . . To-day I feel passably well again. You and Crosse will complete my recovery by coming and dining with me. . . .

"Believe me,

"Very truly and very gratefully yours,

"W. S. LANDOR."

His birthday was the 30th of January. I remember his saying, "I rejoice at the date on which I was born, because it is the anniversary of the execution of Charles I., and I can celebrate the two events on the same day." Intolerant in words, but kind in deeds, as this short extract from another of Landor's letters will prove—

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"My friend Forster is to receive £5 from the editor of the *National Magazine* for a short criticism of mine, and gives it to two ladies left very poor. Never will I benefit myself by anything I write."

Landor mentions the name of Miss Lynn in one of the foregoing letters. It will be remembered by those who knew him at the time, that the sincere friendship, almost filial devotion, of this lady—better known to the present generation as Mrs. Lynn Linton—was a great solace to Landor in those solitary days at Bath. Those remarkable novels of her girlhood, "Ayeth, the Egyptian," and a "Romance of the Days of Pericles," * give evidence that Miss Lynn's youthful genius had felt responsively the influence of the most classical writer of our day.

It has been objected that, classical as

* "Amymone."

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Landor was, yet he was not really a great scholar; maybe, but one is reminded of Shelley's answer, when surprise was expressed that Keats, who was ignorant of Greek, could have written "Hyperion." He said, "The reason is, Keats *was* a Greek." On the other hand, the orthodox have their fling at Landor, because, as they say, "he was such an old pagan." In rejoinder to such cavillers, I would quote a passage from Landor's own writings, where he says—

"Christianity is so kind that one objection to it, the worst indeed and the weakest, is the impracticability of performing all the kindness it enjoins. . . . Our English burial service is the most impressive thing to be found in any religion: it is framed on the character of the people, and preserves it. . . . As for philosophy, if our philosophy tell us anything which

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shocks, or troubles, or perplexes our humanity, let us doubt it."

I well remember one evening when we were Landor's guests—we were on our way to stay with Kenyon at Wimbledon, and stopped at Bath on purpose to take the latest news of him to our common friend—the conversation turned upon Shakespeare and Milton. My husband, with whom I utterly disagreed on this point, placed Milton on an equal footing with the many-sided Shakespeare. He tried to tease me by saying that my sex were angry with the author of "Paradise Lost" for describing our mother Eve as "of outward form elaborate, of inward less exact." We pursued our subject half in joke, half seriously. Landor remarked that "Milton is among the least witty of mankind, and seldom attempts a witticism unless he is angry." While we were

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talking on in the desultory way that people do talk, I opened a volume of the "Imaginary Conversations," and read aloud now and again a favourite passage touching on the matter in hand, and, as I hoped, the fountain-depths of memory were stirred, and Landor flashed out many an old thought—precious gems all of them—in the trickery of a new setting. Alas! that I do not remember the spoken words, but must quote the marked passages of long ago.

"Yes," says Landor, "Shakespeare may have borrowed from others, but he was more original than the originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life. A rib of Shakespeare would have made a Milton."

That is a fine passage where Landor, in the "Imaginary Conversations," makes Southey remark that—

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"There is as great a difference between Shakespeare and Bacon, as between an American forest and a London timber-yard. In the timber-yard the materials are sawed, and squared, and set across; in the forest we have the natural form of the tree, all its growth, all its branches, all the mosses that grow upon it, all the birds and insects that inhabit it; now deep shadows absorbing the whole wilderness, now untroubled skies, now terrific thunder-storms; everywhere multiformity, everywhere immensity."

Talking of French criticism of our great poets, Landor amused us much by repeating the remark that "Voltaire stuck to Milton and Shakespeare as a woodpecker does to an old forest tree, only for the purpose of picking out what was rotten."

It was characteristic of Landor that

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after his arrows of wit had sped with unerring aim, he would unbend the bow, tossing Solomon and all his wisdom to the winds; and then he would talk the veriest nonsense with the youngest of us, but better still with Pomero, who, in the absence of children—always dearly loved by Landor—was literally his playmate.

When the explosive episode of fun and frolic between the playful dog and his not less playful master had ended—much to the relief of our nerves—we talked, I remember, that evening of Louis Napoleon. Landor had known him well in the Gore House days, and I noticed had formed a higher estimate of his intellect than was usual with those who knew him in the time of his exile. Landor said Prince Louis had fits of moody abstraction that were very peculiar. At one time he had

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the habit of frequenting a tailor's shop in Regent Street, where, half leaning against the door, he would gaze in silence for hours together on the ceaseless moving crowd that passed before him.

Landor told us that the prince had presented to him his volume on military tactics, writing on the fly-leaf some very highflown compliments to "Walter Savage Landor, the most eloquent, and one of the noblest friends of liberty," etc. "This volume I returned to him in 1849," said Landor, "as an expression of my indignation on hearing that President Louis Napoleon had sent French troops to occupy Rome."

Landor's fondness for children was very genuine; in nearly all his letters to us there is some reference to our little boys. In one to my husband—as usual undated, but which belongs to 1853—he writes—

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"My dear Crosse,

"Your letter followed me from Bath to Warwick, and from Warwick to Knowles Lodge, where I am now on a visit to my brother's widow. In five or six days I shall be at Cheltenham, where I expect Boxall to be with me to finish my portrait. The earliest day after I shall be most happy to visit my friends at (Fyne Court) Broomfield. Your letter is indeed most interesting to me. Never did any man deserve more happiness than you do, nor is there any one on earth who has a fairer chance of it for many years to come. You are now fully indemnified for the privation of it, by those on whom kindness was so lavishly bestowed. A gentle heart is the highest recompense of virtue, and you have found it. . . . I am not too old to be playfellow to your little boy, but I suspect he will look at me with

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more gravity than I at him. Two years hence we shall be nearer of a match. . . ."

In another and later letter he writes again more fully and kindly about my young family. There was a touch of deep pathos in the sympathy expressed towards me in my "delightful home," and with my "pleasant companions," coming as it did from the solitary old man—himself so painfully separated from all his own belongings. The letter ends thus:

"Alas! having now entered my eightieth year, I cannot indulge the hope of entering your hospitable house again for several months. I have never gone further than two hundred yards from the house. And now the loss of my sister, my oldest and dearest friend, has deprived me of sleep and digestion."

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Happily our dear old friend recovered both health and spirits; his constitution was wonderfully elastic, and at intervals during the next year or two his conversation, as I remember it, had flashes from his best days, and even his pen was not idle. Landor sent me the following lines in one of his latest letters, but I am not aware whether they were written then or at an earlier date :—

"There are few on whom fortune in one form or other,
So various and numberless, never hath smiled;
One fountain the sands of the desert may smother,
Another shall rise 'mid the rocks of the wild!

"We leave the bright lotos that floats on our river,
And the narrow green margin, where youth hath reposed;
Fate drives us—we sigh, but sigh vainly that ever
Our eyes in a slumber less sweet should be closed.

"But while it comes over us, let us assemble
What once were not visions, but visions are now;
Now love shall not torture, now hope shall not tremble,
And the last leaf of myrtle still clings to the brow."

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In 1856, to Landor's great regret, he lost his faithful pet and companion of many years. Poor Pomero died and was buried beneath the spring flowers in the garden. There is a passage from a letter of Landor's which appears in his biography, very characteristic of the kindly nature of the turbulent, irascible, lion-hearted man. He writes—

"The cat lies day and night upon Pomero's grave, and I will not disturb her, kind creature, though I went to plant some violets upon it."

To my shame I confess that Pomero's noisy barking had been very disturbing and annoying to me at times, when rational conversation seemed preferable to his obstreperous play. But I shall never forget my first visit to the little drawing-room in Rivers Street after Pomero's death; the very silence of the room fell

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upon me like a reproach. And the sight of the old man himself in his loneliness, sitting so still and quiet in his armchair, without even the distraction of his noisy little friend, was infinitely pathetic! In repose Landor's countenance showed at best the habitually lofty nature of his thoughts, the sweetness and noble refinement of his soul. In recalling our old friend as I saw him then, in the last fading gleam of the summer evening I am irresistibly reminded of Landor's own often-quoted and exquisite valedictory lines, the motto of his last book—

"I strove with none, for none was worth the strife;
Nature I loved, and next to Nature—Art.
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

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THE WEDDED POETS.

When Wordsworth heard of the marriage of Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett, he remarked in his dry level tone, "Doubtless they will speak more intelligibly to each other than they have yet done to the public." Wordsworth was an old man when he uttered these words, and unlikely, being the age he was, to accept any new message of poetic inspiration, especially if conveyed in an unaccustomed form. Even forty years earlier Coleridge had complained that Wordsworth desired to make modern poetry sectarian, with limitations fixed

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by his own dogmatism. At no period perhaps of his life would he have had eyes to see the dawn of any "new morning" other than the glow which the "Lyrical Ballads" had brought upon earth, dispelling by their natural colours the cold and rigid forms of classicism! But allowing for a certain narrowness of vision on the part of Wordsworth, in saying what he did of the want of intelligibility, he but echoed public opinion regarding the poetry of Browning—at the time.

Miss Mitford, the literary gossip of the period, and at the same time the most intimate friend of the poetess, shares Wordsworth's views with respect to the author of "Paracelsus." In a letter to Charles Boner she writes—

"The great news of the season is the marriage of my beloved friend Elizabeth

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Barrett to Robert Browning. I have seen him once only, many years ago. He is, I hear from all quarters, a man of immense attainment and great conversational power. As a poet I think him overrated. . . . Those things on which his reputation rests, 'Paracelsus' and 'Bells and Pomegranates,' are to me as so many riddles."

Miss Mitford, had she lived on to the last decade, doubtless would have joined the Browning Society, and escaped all danger of being strangled by the Sphinx. In another letter to the same correspondent, she writes—

"I at Miss Barrett's wedding! Ah, dearest Mr. Boner, it was a runaway match: never was I so much astonished. He prevailed on her to meet him at church with only the two necessary witnesses. They went to Paris. There

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they stayed a week. Happening to meet with Mrs. Jameson, she joined them in their journey to Pisa; and accordingly they travelled by diligence, by railway, by Rhone boat—anyhow—to Marseilles, thence took shipping to Leghorn, and then settled themselves at Pisa for six months. She says she is very happy. God grant it continue! I felt just exactly as if I had heard that Dr. Chambers had given her over when I got the letter announcing her marriage, and found that she was about to cross to France. I never had an idea of her reaching Pisa alive. She took her own maid and her (dog) Flush. I saw Mr. Browning once. Many of his friends and mine, William Harness, John Kenyon, and Henry Chorley, speak very highly of him. I suppose he is an accomplished man, and if he makes his angelic wife happy, I shall of course learn to like him."

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As we know, this proved one of the happiest runaway matches on record. The Grotes were equally happy, but then they were not of the *irritabile genus*—ah, there's the rub! Poets, and such as are of imagination all compact, have not the reputation of making good husbands. Some men—Carlyle excepted—have had patient Griselda-like wives, who have borne a great deal, silently and in pure self-effacement, as did Tom Moore's wife. A much-aggrieved French lady went so far as to say, in excusing her husband, "*Mon Dieu, que les gens d'esprit sont bêtes!*"

Wordsworth, more fortunate than Landor, Coleridge, or Byron, wedded and lived happily with *his* "phantom of delight." De Quincey had a strong impression "that neither Coleridge nor Byron could have failed to quarrel with *any* wife,

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though a Pandora sent down from heaven to bless him." Probably Miss Barrett's family took an adverse view of *any* poet-husband, when they opposed her marriage with Browning; and something of fear and doubt may reasonably have clouded the hopes of her best friends, for was she not also a poet? It was indeed doubling the risks and chances of life's welfare for poet to wed with poet; it was tempting the very gods by trying thus to win a bliss unknown to mortals; yet the story of this rare union remains a golden-lettered legend, good for all time!

In practical seriousness, the risks incurred were of no ordinary kind, when Browning "indulged the one dramatic impulse of his life," and snatched his gifted bride from the arms of Death. Nor is the expression a mere figure of speech. Death was very near the languid sufferer,

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who had been condemned to her "sofa and silence" from girlhood, till now, when in her thirty-eighth year she was destined by Heaven's beneficence to feel the transforming power of—love. In her own exquisite verse she tells the crowning incident of her story:

"I saw in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
And a voice said, in mastery, while I strove,
'Guess now who holds thee?' 'Death!' I said.
But there,
The silver answer rang, 'Not Death, but Love!'"

In writing of the marriage to her frequent correspondent, Mr. Horne, Mrs. Browning says, "Our plans were made up at last in the utmost haste and agitation—precipitated beyond all intention." Well, indeed, that they did precipitate

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matters, for there can be little doubt her life would have been the forfeit, had she submitted much longer to the virtual imprisonment to her "sofa and silence" in a "darkened room." Why, in the name of common sense, the poor invalid should have been condemned to a darkened room, we know not; the very flowers in their instinct seek the light—the light so necessary to all created things, except the blind-made Proteus of the under-world.

From Mr. Kenyon—her cousin and our friend—I heard many interesting particulars of those "sweet, sad years" which this remarkable woman passed in deep seclusion. "I live in London, to be sure," she writes, "but except for the glory of it, I might live in a desert—so profound is my solitude." Kenyon was one of the few who were admitted to see Elizabeth Barrett; and we, who knew "good joyous

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Kenyon," were well aware what light and leading, what fresh air from the outer world, what flashes from the flint and steel of daily talk, he must have brought to that gloomy chamber, which "did not even look into the street." When the invalid lost her voice—as she did sometimes—then, as she says herself, Kenyon would give her a monodrama "talk for an hour as he can talk, while the audience could only clap her hands, or shake her head for yea or nay." It was Kenyon who brought to her notice all the new books that were best worth reading—Browning's poems among others. The poet's recent volume, "Bells and Pomegranates," was dedicated to Kenyon. These poems are now dispersed, according to that arbitrary fashion of classification which so sadly interferes with the higher interest of tracing in order of time the growth and

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development of a writer's ideas and convictions.

While knowing him as yet only by his writings, Miss Barrett found in Browning no "hard riddles," like dear Miss Mitford in her superficial literary criticism; but, on the contrary, had "full faith in him as poet and prophet," adding significantly, "he is a poet for posterity." She herself, inspired by Mrs. Jameson, had just then written a noble poem, which had no need to wait upon the grudging verdict of posterity; for it touched to the quick the conscience of her contemporaries; and as long as the weakness of the poor and injured little ones, with their burden of toil and sorrow, appeal for protection, so long will her "Cry of the Children" find a response in the human heart. Our poetess is always at her best when dealing with the tangible facts of life, rather

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than with imagined vice or virtue. This reminds one of Croker's remark, where he says, "*History*, I fear, deals in fiction; but good poetry is concerned only with *realities* either of visible or moral nature."

I have in my possession a characteristic letter of Miss Barrett's; written in 1842, it gives us a glimpse of her life in those days, and is a fair example of certain peculiarities in her prose style. She writes—

"My dearest Annie,

"I have deferred, more days than I at first intended, thanking you for your kind letter, and satisfactory, and therefore most welcome, account of your health and position at Taunton. But how long do you remain there? Are you so pleased with your castle as to live there happily all the days of your life, or do

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you mean some time to cross the drawbridge and come to London? Your question to Henrietta about pretty bonnets leads me to hope that we shall see you again, and that Mr. ——" (the lady's husband) "has not checkmated you by castleing his queen for ever and ever. My sonnet to Wordsworth—which is in fact, as you will see, a sonnet on a picture of Wordsworth — I enclose under this cover, and acknowledge that it was scarcely worth so much waiting for. Arabel put off attending to your request, but did not mean to neglect it altogether. The sonnet was occasioned by the kindness of Mr. Haydon, the artist, who sent the picture to me, and who afterwards, without consulting me, sent the sonnet to the poet, the result of the whole being that Wordsworth wrote to me very kindly with his own hand.

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"The 'Mr. Cornwall Barry Wilson' is not, as I *fancy you fancy*, Barry Cornwall the poet, but simply a Mr. Cornwall *Baron* Wilson and the very undistinguished husband of Mrs. Cornwall Baron Wilson, who edits the *Belle Assemblée*, and writes diluted verses and watery novels. I say an 'undistinguished husband,' because I never heard of his being remarkable for anything in the world except for husbandship of the authoress. Inquire if I am not right. Barry Cornwall's real name is Procter. . . . Dear Mr. Boyd has been writing a good deal to me lately, and we have been quarrelling fiercely about Wordsworth; and I am pleased through all the quarrelling to see him armed with his old iron and energy, exactly as of yore. Thanks for inquiring about me; I am very essentially better, certainly *must* be, for within these last ten weeks the spit-

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ting of blood has quite stopped for the first time since I broke the vessel, and it may be the Divine will to restore me. The weather serves me, and is so unseasonably and delightfully mild, that a fire has been a mere superfluity; and indeed to-day and yesterday I have had my fire put out, and sate more pleasantly without any, this day being the 1st of December."

The sonnet referred to is now before me, copied out in her delicate, neat handwriting on a half-sheet of note-paper yellow with age, and is signed "Elizabeth Barrett B." The lines, though probably not unfamiliar, may be recalled to the reader's recollection:

"Wordsworth upon Helvellyn! Let the cloud
Ebb audibly along the mountain-wind,
Then break against the rock, and show behind
The lowland valleys floating up to crowd
The sense with beauty—*He* with forehead bowed

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And humble-lidded eyes, as one inclined
Before the sovran thoughts of his own mind,
And very meek with inspirations proud,
Takes here his rightful place as poet-priest
By the high altar, singing prayer and prayer
To the yet higher Heav'ns. A vision free
And noble, Haydon hath thine art releast.
No portrait this with academic air—
This is the poet and his poetry."

Sara Coleridge, who was no mean critic, took exception to what she calls the "bodily organism" of Mrs. Browning's poetry. "In many passages," she says, "the expressions are very faulty, the images forced and untrue, the situations unnatural and unpleasant; whereas poetry should carry with it an influence and impression of delightfulness." The *genre* of a writer is made up of defects as well as beauties, or, as Buffon puts it, "*le style est l'homme même.*" Even against the canons of good taste the style remains as something inherent to every original

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mind; it is like the wart on Cromwell's face—it is there, but you must be a poor creature indeed if you can see nothing else but the wart on the Lord Protector's face. Miss Cobbe's only recorded criticism on Robert Browning's poems is, that "to read them is like riding in a hansom cab, with a lame horse, over a rough road." The road is rough, and the horse may be lame, but there is a glorious landscape beyond the hedge, if you are tall enough to look over, or can find courage to grasp the blackthorn and gain a standpoint for the view.

In her "Handbook to Browning's Works," Mrs. Orr mentions the fact that, as a young man, he was not insensible to suggestive criticism. He made an effort to avoid the "verbosity" which John Stirling complained of in "Paracelsus," and gave also some weight to the re-

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minder of Caroline Fox, that Wordsworth sometimes took a fortnight in discovering a single word that was the one fit for his sonnets. As the result, Browning "contented himself with two words, where he would rather have used ten;" and, continues Mrs. Orr, "the harsh and involved passages in 'Sordello,' which add so much to the remoteness of its thought, were the first consequences of this lesson. . . . The dread of being diffuse rooted itself in his mind."

Miss Barrett met adverse criticism in a different spirit; there was a fine vein of obstinacy in her character. In reply to her friend Horne, who had objected to her rhymes, she says with great insistence that her rhymes are meant for rhymes, and that she has chosen them and selected them on principle with a determinate object. About this time

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Kenyon, who had been guilty some years before of a volume of poetry, had made a graceful paraphrase of Schiller's "Gods of Greece," which, as he himself modestly said, was glorified in calling forth Miss Barrett's "noble lyric" of "The Dead Pan." This last was shown to Browning in manuscript, before the future lovers were acquainted. The poet wrote to Kenyon a note on the subject, which the latter did not fail to send to his cousin. In great triumph Miss Barrett quotes this letter of Browning's as a refutation of the objections raised by Horne. She says, "The note was sent as likely to please me, and pleased me so much . . . and not the least from the beauty of the figure used to illustrate my *rhymatology*, that I begged to keep it."

When Kenyon, who knew already that they were kindred souls, introduced

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Browning to his cousin, he had something to say of the man as well as the poet; he had been intimate with him for some years. Recalling the impression I received when I first became acquainted with Kenyon's set—if he could be said to have a set, for he knew everybody—I should say that Browning was considered stronger than his writings. "He talks so well and so forcibly, pity he's so obscure in his poetry," was the occasional remark. Landor used to say, "Give me ten accomplished men for readers, and I am content." Browning, without doubt, had found his "ten," but a great many others, who were not impelled by any vogue to read his poetry, judged him by another standard, and voted him one of the best talkers among guests whom Kenyon and Harness knew so well how to select—as guests should be selected

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for sympathy of character and for diversity of opinion. The taste of the day—just before the first International Exhibition—was not eminently poetical; perhaps we talked too much of science and technical arts. The *ben trovato* story of the publisher's answer to the "person from Porlock," or elsewhere, who desired to sell his volume of verse for a good round sum, and see himself famous, may be recalled; the man of business, in rejecting the obliging offer of the unknown, observed, "There is no market for poetry at present; if Shakespeare were alive, he would have difficulty in finding a publisher; indeed, I will go further—if Prince Albert himself were to offer a volume of poems, it would probably be declined."

By this time, of course, Tennyson had risen high above the horizon, but I recollect being present at a dinner-party, when

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Douglas Jerrold and some of his set loudly applauded the reading of a parody in manuscript, the point of which was unsparing ridicule of the so-called "Carpet Knight Dandyism" of the new Laureate.

Landor had noted the decline in poetic feeling, in his "Lines to Andrew Crosse," where he says—

> "No longer do the girls for Moore
> Jilt Horace as they did before.
>
> * * * *
>
> Others there are whose future day
> No slender glories shall display;
> But you would think me worse than tame
> To find me stringing name on name.
>
> * * * *
>
> Now chiefly female voices rise
> (And sweet are they) to cheer our skies."

Age could not wither Landor's poetic fervour or stay his readiness to receive the newly moulded thoughts of a younger generation; he was amongst the earliest of Robert Browning's admirers, and,

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curiously enough, of his wife also—before she was his wife. He was thinking of her when he spoke of the "female voices." The feeling of admiration was intensified when, later on, "Aurora Leigh" was published. He wrote to Forster, "I had no idea that any one in this age was capable of so much poetry. I am half drunk with it."

It was from Landor, as well as from Kenyon, that we were continually hearing the praises of Mrs. Browning and her works. At that time she seemed to me, and I think to others, a more interesting personage in quality of her genius than her husband, to whose writings, as she herself says, nobody in England pretends to do justice, except "a small knot of pre-Raffaelite men."

It was, then, with no ordinary feelings of pleasurable anticipation I learnt that

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we were bidden specially to meet "Mrs. Browning at dinner" at Mr. Kenyon's. It was during their visit to London in 1851, but on this particular evening Mr. Browning, for some reason or other, was not present. I think the guests only numbered fourteen—Mr. Kenyon disliked a crowded dinner-table; Mrs. Browning was the guest of the evening, and, with his old-fashioned courtesy, our host introduced every one to her, for those present were nearly all strangers to the poetess. How rarely the personality of a favourite author fulfils expectation! Mrs. Browning's face was not the one I had pictured to myself. In reality, at least to my finding, she had a distinctly hard-featured, non-sympathetic aspect; the brow was a noble soul-case, and the eyes were dark and penetrating, but the mouth was hard and immobile for any play of expression,

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while the lower jaw showed something of the strength of obstinacy. She wore her hair in long ringlets, which, falling very much over her face, and when seen in profile, suggested the unpleasing idea of blinkers, that harshly cut across the graceful curves of brow and cheek. It was this style of arranging her dark hair that made Mrs. Browning look, not old-fashioned—for that would have given a touch of sentiment—but strangely out of the fashion. Her slight pretty figure was rather disguised than set off by garments that fell lopping round her; but, thank Heaven! she was entirely and utterly free from the bad taste of the self-styled clever women, who acknowledge themselves to be failures, as women, by aping a masculine style of dress and address.

In conversation Mrs. Browning seemed reserved, with a certain proud aloofness of

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manner; at the same time there was a listening reticence in her attitude that did not help the playful tossing to and fro of talk. Occasionally she flung her remarks into the midst of the discussion, and such remarks were weighed, measured, and full of sense and purpose. It was evident that Mrs. Browning had not thrown off the habit, acquired in the years of silence in her darkened chamber, of conversing, in a one-sided way, with the best books, which is vastly different from conversing with the best men. "Good talk" has an unexpressed mutual understanding—has a kindling reserve of hidden sympathy, a magnetism as powerful as the earth currents, and, moreover, in the free play of thought from lips that smile and brows that frown there is an equipoise of sense and nonsense, of serious fact and sparkling triviality, an effervescence of nascent

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wit that can never get itself written down!

I remember speaking with Crabb Robinson about Mrs. Browning; he partly agreed with me, but not entirely. He was not so disappointed as I was with her reserve in conversation; being a great talker himself, he specially valued the gift of silence in others. He found the poetess very interesting and pleasing, and commended her for "taking no opportunity of display, and apparently having no desire."

During this memorable Exhibition year Miss Mitford came up to town to meet her dear friend Mrs. Browning, and found it very surprising to see her with a little boy of her own, and walking about like other people. In his proud joy at her improved health, Mrs. Browning thought her husband talked too much on the subject, and she laughingly said to him, "You

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needn't talk so much to people of how your wife walked here with you and there with you, as if a wife with a pair of feet was a miracle of nature."

In Mrs. Sutherland Orr's interesting "Life of Robert Browning," she has given some extracts—would that there were more!—from his wife's letters. They are delightful in their spontaneity, and those to Miss Mitford supply some records of their life in Italy, which was henceforth to be their home. In a letter written soon after her marriage, she says, in speaking of her husband—

"The intellect is so little in comparison to all the rest—to the womanly tenderness, the inexhaustible goodness, the high and noble aspiration of every hour. Temper, spirits, manners—there is not a flaw anywhere. . . . Robert is a warm admirer of Balzac . . . but in a general way he does

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not appreciate our French people quite with my warmth. He takes too high a standard."

The infatuation displayed by her correspondent Miss Mitford, and by Mrs. Browning herself, for the French and Louis Napoleon—if history forgive the bracketing—was very curious indeed, and shows a twist in the judgment of the female politicians. Miss Mitford, in a letter to Charles Boner, dated 1852, writes—

"Is not Louis Napoleon a fine fellow? . . . Mrs. Browning (who was in Paris at the time) says that the courage and activity shown in the *coup d'état* have never been surpassed. Paris was with him from the first to the last. She tells some capital stories of Emile de Girardin, and says that the Prince says of himself that his life will have four phases: one all rashness

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and imprudence necessary to make his name known, and to make his own faults known to himself; the next, to the combat with, and triumph over, anarchy; the third, the consolation of France and pacification of Europe; the last, *un coup de pistolet.*"

It is curious that neither Louis Napoleon nor his uncle should have had a dramatic ending, but "just have died in the usual way of disease and doctors," as Allan Cunningham said the two daughters of Mrs. Siddons had died, and not, as it was rumoured, of broken hearts for love of Sir Thomas Lawrence who had jilted them both.

But to go back to the home life of the Brownings in Italy, as recorded in her letters—and no one can speak with so much assurance of their happiness as herself. She writes from Rome—

"Think what we have done since I

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last wrote to you. Taken two houses, that is, two apartments, each for six months, presigning the contract. You will set it down to excellent poet's work in the way of domestic economy, but the fault was altogether mine as usual. My husband, to please me, took rooms which I could not be pleased with three days through the absence of sunshine and warmth. . . . So away we came to the blaze of the sun in Piazza Pitti; . . . I with my remorse, and poor Robert without a single reproach. Any other man a little lower than the angels would have stamped and sworn a little for the mere relief of the thing—but as to *his* being angry with *me* for any cause, except not eating enough dinner, the said sun would turn the wrong way first."

Mrs. Butler,* who saw a great deal of

* Fanny Kemble.

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them in Rome, remarked that "Mr. Browning was the only man she had ever known who behaved like a Christian to his wife."

Well mated as they were, the poet and his wife had, after all, to endure the common lot of poor human nature. With limited means, it was vexing to select an apartment and then "pay away heaps of guineas" to leave it because the windows did not look due south. The soul-cure of happiness had done wonders for Mrs. Browning, but her bodily ailments were too deep-seated for perfect restoration, and in the winters she fell back "to the home-bound conditions of earlier years." In the biography of Robert Browning there is a passage of deep significance, a homily in itself, where Mrs. Orr remarks—

"The deep heart-love, the many-sided intellectual sympathy, preserved their

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union in rare beauty to the end. But to say that it thus maintained itself as if by magic, without effort of self-sacrifice on his part or of resignation on hers, would be as unjust to the noble qualities of both, as it would be false to assert that its compensating happiness had ever failed them."

In 1852 the Brownings were again in London, and often at Kenyon's, where we occasionally met them: "Kenyon the magnificent," as Browning said he deserved to be called, "for his lavish hospitality and large-hearted benevolence." I must dissent, however, from the words "lavish hospitality;" the great charm of Kenyon's table was the absence of display and superfluity, while everything was of the best and in the best taste. Many well-known Americans were to be met from time to time at Kenyon's parties;

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they, I perceived, were very enthusiastic about Robert Browning. His wife, while complaining of the "blindness, deafness, and stupidity of the English public" towards him, was justified in saying that "in America he is a power, a writer, a poet—he is read, he lives in the hearts of the people."

Amongst those of her husband's poems which "lived" specially in Mrs. Browning's heart, it is interesting to know that one of her favourites was the poem, not generally very popular, called "Apparent Failure." The lines are very characteristic of the writer. He describes himself as passing from a gay fête at the Tuileries, to saunter by the banks of the river, when chance impelled him to enter the Morgue. The terrible realism of the scene holds the reader reluctant, yet spell-bound—it is branded on the

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memory; but the heavy weight of despair is lifted by the poet's sympathetic reverence for the "God-made" men lying so *low* in death. Believing in the "wide compass," of which life, as we call it, is but a segment, he suffers a ray of divine hope to fall upon the great mystery of evil. In his quality of mercy Browning is without stint, his humanity is never at fault; while, on the contrary, the author of "Aurora Leigh" appears to me to lack somewhat this noble charity—her womanly nature leads her to hate the sinner, and to scold him overmuch. This jarring note, together with the intrusion of some coarseness, which surely is not strength, occurs at times in the book, which has many fine passages and many *longueurs*.

Those are good lines in which she says—

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"There's not a crime
But takes its proper change out still in crime,
If once rung on the counter of this world;
Let sinners look to it."

Mrs. Browning's impatient scorn of all narrowness is apt to be in itself narrow. Virtues not of her choice are for mere "frigid use of life." The character of the "Aunt" in her novel in verse is drawn with clever, unsparing irony, but without sympathy for the righteousness of any nature other than her own. Of the "Lady Bountiful" she says—

"She had lived, we'll say,
A harmless life, she called a virtuous life,
A quiet life, which was not life at all.
* * * * *
The poor-club exercised her Christian gifts
Of knitting stockings, stitching petticoats,
Because we are of one flesh after all,
And need one flannel (with a proper sense
Of difference in the quality)."

Now the gifted Aurora, so the story

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goes, has no sort of patience with all these book-club charities; she sees another exercise of Christian gifts; she will reform the world with Art — with "rhythmic thought,"—good; she has her talent; by all means let her use it, and give us perchance "a heavenward lift;" but when "poor Tom's a-cold," the flannel is the thing.

The first part, and by far the most interesting part, of "Aurora Leigh" may be taken as autobiographical. The mental development of the poet's own nature is admirably described. She lived in a world of books, and read, not calculating profits of so much help by so much reading, but plunged

> "Soul-forward, headlong into a book's profound,
> Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth."

Then there came to Aurora, as to every one of us who seeks for the peace which

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passeth all understanding, some hard swimming through the deeps. She says—

> "I lost breath in my soul sometimes,
> And cried, 'God save me if there's any God;'
> But even so, God saved me; and being dashed
> From error on to error, every turn
> Still brought me nearer to the central truth."

The last pages of "Aurora Leigh" were written under the hospitality of Mr. Kenyon's roof, a fact Mrs. Browning mentions in dedicating the volume to him. She says, "I venture to leave in your hands this book, the most mature of my works, and the one into which my highest convictions upon Life and Art have entered."

Kenyon had lent his house to the Brownings, he being away ill at the Isle of Wight. I had at this time, in the autumn of 1856, more than one opportunity of meeting Mrs. Browning, when circumstances led us to speak on personal

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and intimate subjects. Our conversation referred to certain matters interesting to Mr. Kenyon, and about which he desired to be informed. Mrs. Browning's plans were to join him later on in the Isle of Wight; and she did so, but her visit was very brief, for our poor friend had become seriously ill. The "apostle of cheerfulness," as we called him amongst us, was never to return to Devonshire Place, and never more to gather around him the "old familiar faces" as of yore.

A few weeks later I received a copy of "Aurora Leigh;" on the title-page, in the author's own hand, was written, "From Mr. Kenyon." He, the warm-hearted and most generous of friends, died within a fortnight.

It was after the publication of her book, her greatest success, according to the contemporary verdict, and after her return to

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Florence, that Mrs. Browning, to her husband's intense disgust, took up violently with the so-called "spiritualism" rampant at the time. It is admitted on all sides that this teasing subject was the only occasion of real difference between them in their sixteen years of married life. Mrs. Browning's imagination was stronger than her judgment: this must be allowed. To her, then, the mysticism that promised new revelations to a soul desiring the evidence of things not seen, had a peculiar attraction; while to the more masculine intellect of her husband, the alleged "manifestations" were nothing but a "hateful form of foolery."

Mrs. Orr's remarks in her biography of the poet sums up all that need perhaps be said on the subject:—

"They might agree to differ as to the abstract merits of spiritualism; but Mr.

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Browning could not resign himself to his wife's trustful attitude towards some of the individuals who at that moment represented it. . . . He chafed against the public association of her name with theirs. Both his love for, and his pride in, her resented it."

That Mr. Browning's "love for and pride in" his wife remained in its strength to the evening of his days, is shown by the fact of his uncontrolled expression of resentment at a slight to her memory in a letter, published recently, but written thoughtlessly by a hand dead thirty years before, when the news reached England that the gifted author of "Aurora Leigh" had passed away. Mrs. Browning died in the summer of 1861, at Florence, where she was "lamented with extraordinary demonstrations." "The Italians understood her by an instinct," writes her

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husband in a letter describing the circumstances of her death, which, like her own last uttered word, was "beautiful." Did she so speak of the human love that had made her life "beautiful," or was that word, so emphatic and spiritual, a sign that her poet-soul beheld already the lifting of the veil?

The "letter" in its entirety belongs to Robert Browning's Life, and must not be irreverently read elsewhere; enough to say that it is almost unique in its simple pathos, in its depth and intensity of feeling, and is distinctive for the manly expression of the writer's resolve to fulfil his own life "as she would require were she here."

Some friends of mine, who saw a good deal of Mr. Browning in 1865, told me that he used frequently to speak to them of his wife. On one occasion he pointed

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to a drawing of his study in *Casa Guidi*, their Florence home, and said, "You see that chair—I sat there waiting to hear of the birth of our child and of her safety." The words were few, but because of their fewness they spoke volumes.

The years went on, the past had wedded the future, in memory and in promise; he, the poet, now lonely, had to fulfil the purpose of his life. The work came to him almost suddenly, and he thus describes the uplifting of his soul—

> "A spirit laughs and leaps through every limb,
> And lights my eye, and lifts me by the hair,
> Letting me have my will again with these."

The materials of "The Ring and the Book," collected long before, had been lying dormant, till, as by a flash, he saw their poetic use and purpose. The raw material worked up by the poet into his "greatest constructive achievement," as

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some critics say, was nothing more or less than a faded manuscript, chanced upon in an old curiosity shop in Florence, bought for the value of eightpence, and found to contain the full records of a Roman murder-trial in the seventeenth century. The actualities of life seem generally to have been selected by Mr. Browning for the ground-plan of his poetic superstructure. An interesting proof of his method of working came before me a few years since. I was lent by a friend the quite recently published little volume, a very precious volume of "Ferishtah's Fancies." The author himself had pencilled on its pages various notes, stating when and how such and such thoughts had occurred to him. Against one paragraph was written, "A telegram in the *Times*," adding place and date; three or four other passages were

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"suggested," if I recollect rightly, by other incidents mentioned in the newspapers, or from some statement in a review, or by an anecdote in an old book of travels long ago stored in the memory. The main idea, as Mrs. Orr remarks, "grew out of a fable by Pilfray, which Mr. Browning read as a boy."

In 1872 I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Browning again. On one occasion of his taking me in to dinner, I made known to him that I too was Kenyon's friend. We talked much of the old days in Devonshire Place, and he observed, "It is very pleasant to me to hear Kenyon's name tossing to and fro." Mr. Browning was very intimate at the house where we were dining, and I noticed that one of the servants placed a decanter of port wine near him, offering him no other during dinner. On expressing my

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surprise at his drinking port, having been so long in Italy, he replied, "It is because I have been so long in Italy that I am tired of their sour wines." In the course of conversation I mentioned that an accident had happened to our gas-meter, and that when I left my house the place was in darkness. "I should not be surprised if the same thing occurred to me," said Mr. Browning, "for my critics tell me there is something very wrong with my metre." The reviews of "The Ring and the Book" were then appearing.

Years before, when they met in Rome, Lockhart had said, "I like Browning; he isn't at all like a damned literary man." I would not presume to say "ditto" to Mr. Lockhart or Mr. Burke, but I don't know how Mr. Browning can be better described than by this forcible remark on what he was not. In conversation he was

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a many-sided man. I have heard him talk on financial matters as Solomon himself might have spoken had he been a member of the Stock Exchange. Mr. Browning's enthusiasm for Italy did not prevent a feeling of soreness at their taxing his interest coupons. Investors generally have been broken in since then to the doleful fact of seeing their property confiscated. Remarkable for his common-sense "handling of daily life," Mr. Browning contrasted favourably with the poet-dreamer of literary history, who can neither keep the Ten Commandments nor his own accounts. He would never have said, as did recently an eclectic Oxford Don in his superior tone, "What is the meaning of these lines across the cheque?" The impression made on me by Mr. Browning in his quality of layman, not as poet, was that of a thorough-paced English

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gentleman, not aristocratic in appearance or even scholarly in manner, and still less a doctrinaire in argument. All the time, this is the same man who in the spirit confidence which a poet gives *only* to his readers, with rare eloquence and imperial thought, could report "as a man may of God's work," where "All's love, yet all's law," as seen "in the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod."

The social critic is hard to satisfy; what is done, or what is left undone, gives occasion to his cavilling tongue. "What has Browning been doing since his wife's death?" said such an one. "Oh, he has been dining out," was the reply. And why, in the name of all true sentiment, should he not have been dining out? It was enough that during the whole of his married life he devoted all his evenings—

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without regret or thought of himself—to the companionship of his invalid wife, who could rarely go abroad into society. Mr. Browning, who was now living in London, with no one to claim his evenings, enjoyed society with honest zest, and found himself invited everywhere. The "high thinkers" are not necessarily "plain livers;" besides, who shall prove that the poet or prose-writer under trial for worldliness, has had the crucial test offered him of a choice between the stalled ox or the dinner of herbs? Those who content themselves with plain living become shy of the fêted diner-out, and insensibly, and without set purpose, there is a drifting apart. The habit of luxury throws a chain round the best of us, and then comes a warning that "the world is too much with us." I remember Mr. Kinglake saying with the candour peculiar to his humour, "that he

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for one preferred dining with people who had good glass and china and plenty of servants." Do these nice things always prove an immunity against boredom? If so, then let happiness be gauged by the amount of income-tax, and poets be told to leave off talking nonsense!

A trivial anecdote occurs to me which has nothing to do with the "Countesses" who were supposed to absorb Mr. Browning overmuch. It appeared that on one occasion Mr. Browning's son had hired a room in a neighbouring house in which to exhibit his pictures. In the temporary absence of the artist, Mr. Browning was doing the honours, the room being half filled with fashionable friends. Mr. Browning was standing near the door, when a visitor, unannounced, made her appearance; he immediately shook hands with the stranger, or tried to do so, when she

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exclaimed, "Oh, I beg your pardon, but please, sir, I'm the cook. Mr. Barrett asked me to come and see his pictures." "And I am very glad to see you," said Mr. Browning, with ready courtesy. "Take my arm and I will show you round."

The gondoliers of Venice are supposed to know their Tasso and Ariosto; the following little incident leads to the supposition that Browning's "Ride to Ghent" may possibly be found in the poetic repertory of the London cabmen. A neighbour one day saw Mr. Browning alight from a hansom; the cabby looked at the fare in his open palm with an air of dissatisfaction, and, wheeling round, delivered himself of this parting shot: "You may be a d——d good poet, but you're a bad paymaster."

As time goes on, Browning's poetry proves more and more stimulating to his critics and admirers; both classes are

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being unconsciously educated by the poet himself. Out of every three who read him, two at least are seized with the desire of explaining him to the rest of the world. But unless the reader has an assimilating power within him, all these patent digesters do no good. It might be said, as Croker did of Warburton's commentaries on Pope, "Egad, the interpreter is the harder of the two!" Apropos of Pope, it has been recently remarked that one of Browning's "most striking central ideas" has been anticipated by the earlier poet, where he says—

"Then say not man's imperfect, Heav'n at fault;
Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measured to his state and place,
His time a moment and a point his space:
* * * * *
The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind."

Nothing is new. Strictly speaking,

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nothing can be new in ethics, but every age has its own dialect. It is striking, when the above passage from Pope is read in apposition with Browning, to see how immeasurably our contemporary appears beyond him in power of stirring the imagination and uplifting our thoughts to a spiritual conception of things.

It would be very interesting if we knew more of Browning's estimate of other poets. During the not unfrequent opportunities I had of meeting him in society, I never remember his talking of poets or poetry but once, and then the subject was Coleridge. Curiously enough, it was the last time I ever saw him—a circumstance never to be forgotten; it was a few days only before he left London for Italy—never to return! Mr. Browning then seemed remarkably well, and except that he did not bear his shoulders

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so well thrown back as in earlier years, he was wonderfully little changed. As I said, we spoke of Coleridge, and he evinced some surprise at the interest I expressed in that writer, an interest enhanced by the fact that Coleridge, in his "blossoming time," had dwelt among the Quantock Hills, very near the home of my married life, where, in my young days, many traditions lingered about him. Mr. Browning responded to the feeling excited by early and local associations, but I inferred that he held Coleridge's poetry in no great esteem; at the same time, there was an amount of reticence in what he said and left unsaid, that made me doubt whether I was in possession of his opinion. His own distinct originality, and his apparent habit of directly transmuting the materials obtained by reading and experience, in the alembic of his

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own mind, would probably not incline him to a critical attitude, generally speaking.

It is a curious and interesting fact that the wedded poets withheld all mutual criticism or consultation on each other's work while in manuscript; we are told that neither saw the writings of the other till they appeared in the unalterable form of a printed book. A wise resolve, for a poet, above all others, must preserve his own individuality.

Wordsworth and Coleridge, as we know, began writing "The Ancient Mariner" together, till Wordsworth, finding his friend's "manner so different from his own," gave up the attempt—fortunately, I think, all will agree, for each individual mind has its own focus. Browning himself well observes, "When is man strong until he feels alone?"

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Perhaps the most characteristic faculty of mind is humour; a touch of this solvent of genius makes the whole world kin, yet it is purely egoistic, belonging strictly to each man's nature. This incomparable character of individual humour was to be found in Mr. Browning's conversation; the wit was there in its most subtle essence, but because of its subtlety, and its peculiar unlikeness to all models of witty speech or thought, difficult to weigh, measure, or to determine in actual quality.

His broader sense of humour must sometimes have been moved, one would think, by the ratiocinations of the "Society" which met together to expound his writings, while he, the poet-prophet, was yet in the flesh. It chanced that one of those injudicious persons, whose name is Legion, on some occasion

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pressed through the circle gathered round Mr. Browning, and incontinently asked him to explain there and then a difficult passage in one of his own poems—a passage where probably the masterful thoughts elbowed each other for precedence. "Upon my word, I don't know what it means," said the poet, laughing, as he closed the volume thrust into his hands; "I advise you to ask the 'Browning Society'—they'll tell you all about it."

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A MANY-SIDED MAN.

In this iron age of roads and bridges, when hard facts and figures rule the day, and when the arsenals of nations are bristling with cannon, it is good to be reminded sometimes of the inner soul of things. Such a reminder was expressed, a few years ago, by an eminently practical man of science, on the occasion of the opening of the Government School of Mines in London.

"In this utilitarian age," said Dr. Percy in the inaugural discourse to his lectures on Metallurgy, "there is a danger of for-

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getting that the human mind is destined for a higher purpose than that of being wholly absorbed in the material realities of life."

These words are specially significant as coming from one who made it the "task of his life" to teach science practically; but Percy had as many sides to his intellect as a polyhedral crystal has facets. His published works, his private letters, and the nature of the various collections he made, illustrative not only of natural history, but of the Fine Arts, enable us to get some glimpses of this remarkable man, in his library and studio, as well as in his professional laboratory.

John Percy was born at Nottingham on the 23rd of March, 1817. He was the third son of Henry Percy, Esq., a solicitor of considerable standing in that town. In a large packet of old papers of various

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dates,* there is a childish letter which already strikes the keynote of his character. The little fellow writes—

"DEAR AUNT MARY,

"I hope you are well. I went to see Mr. Sadler ascend in his balloon. . . . I am sure you would not have liked to see him in the clouds. Send me a wild beast book as soon as you can. . . .

"Nott^m, November 9, 1823."

John Percy was educated at a private classical school at Southwell. He was removed in his fifteenth year, without having shown any remarkable aptitude for Greek and Latin. He was very fond of drawing, and at one time asked his

* I am indebted to Edmund Percy, Esq., of Beeston, Nottingham, for the sight of his brother's letters and papers; also to Miss Ada Percy for much kind assistance.

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father to let him be a line engraver. Mr. Percy had other views for his son; he desired to educate him for the medical profession. But here again there was a difficulty; the young fellow wished to devote himself to chemistry. There remains a very curious letter, written by him, in the form of an appeal to his father, which is so characteristic that I give an extract. The writing, in Percy's beautiful, small, neat hand, covers three sides of a sheet of foolscap. It contains a good deal of shrewd common sense, expressed in a juvenile and somewhat inflated style, and is plentifully intermixed with Scripture texts and quotations from Shakespeare. He begins by saying—

"I am now in an uncomfortable state of mind concerning my 'agendâ vitâ,' or passing my days of manhood. . . . As you wish me to be an M.D., so I wish

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myself a practical chemist. Recollect, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. You wish to bring me up to be an M.D., I know, with a desire to further my provision; you think the other an uncertain thing, but I think this originates from an utter unacquaintance with the course of a practical chemist. It is true that many, following the processes of their ancestors, only drag out a living with such chemistry as they know; for there is not one of them that has an approximate knowledge of science."

He then goes on to suggest certain improvements in tanning and in the manufacture of drugs.

"Chemistry is not only the most interesting, but the most useful, as well as the most fascinating science. I am very fond of physiology also . . . but I pride myself, and I hope not unjustly, in having

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a delicate sensibility towards living animals. I think I could hardly be persuaded to enter the operation room. . . . If from what I have now impartially said, I may lead you to change your opinion, happy am I here. But you will say it is ridiculous for a child of fifteen years to affect the prime and firm opinion of a man of fifty. . . ."

This appeal did not alter the father's decision, for in little more than a year from this time John Percy went to Paris as a medical student. Meanwhile, he devoted himself to various branches of natural history—he collected plants and butterflies, and made fireworks for the amusement of the townspeople.

It seems he spent more money over saltpetre and sulphur, and the contraptions necessary for catherine-wheels and rockets, than his allowance justified. He writes a

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letter to his father, begging to be "relieved from the intolerable burden of debt." He adds—

"I would not make the application if I could lay hold of any plan by which I could set my hands to work and earn the sum. It is a true proverb, 'Wisdom is never good till it's bought,' and besides being out of pocket, I have lost my time by this transitory amusement—and no one can repay me for that."

Percy attended more than one course of chemical lectures, given by Mr. Grisenthwaite at the Nottingham School of Medicine, and became very intimate with that gentleman; they often propounded together schemes for new inventions and improvements. Mr. Percy at his lawyer's desk was inundated with letters from his son (he always wrote, though they lived under the same roof),

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throwing out suggestions for experiments, or making proposals for commercial speculations in practical chemistry that were sure of bringing in a fortune. The legal mind did not regard any of these enterprises with favour. In one of these communications John Percy says—

"The more I advance in chemistry, the more delight I experience, and in proportion as I proceed, I find how little at present is known. I hope that by steady perseverance and industry and *thinking for myself* (for this is the principal thing), I shall bring forth fruits worthy of my labours."

I remember Babbage saying, "The only real use of books is to make a man think for himself." Percy read into books with the originality of his own mind, accepting opinions with extreme caution. He was so careful that he read a book

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twice or thrice before passing judgment. The nature of his studies led our young chemist in pursuit of facts, as deduced from scientific theories, and when in all humility, and knowing the wisest to be only on the threshold of knowledge, he sees that he must think for himself, we know already what stuff he is made of, and how he will grapple with other men's thoughts.

In one of these early letters there is a very pertinent remark of Percy's; he is as usual defending the pursuit of science, against his father's contention that it fails to lead to financial success. He says, "The great chemist, Schulze, was not a rich man, it is true, but he enriched the world; his chemical discoveries were quite practical (and in other men's hands profitable)." Alas! how many a sad story of the unfortunate inventor is touched on

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in that remark, profitable in other men's hands! The dry records of science have their human and pathetic side.

While young Percy was still knocking about at home—taking up one 'ology after another, and bewildering the household with his overflowing and not always sweet-smelling collections—he was suffering in all probability from a feeling of unrest. Many years later, Dr. Percy told the writer that he had had in his youth serious thoughts of going out as a missionary to some distant part of the world. The fact is interesting, as showing the groundwork of conviction in a mind that in its fuller development retained the spirit of religion while rejecting the letter of formula.

In the spring of 1834 it was wisely resolved by paternal authority that all these castings about and desultory studies were to

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end, and John Percy was to be an M.D. after all. Accordingly he was sent to study at the Paris University for two years.

Young Percy was accompanied by his elder brother Edmund, who was to see him installed in Paris. There is a letter from John to his father, giving his first impressions of London, which is rather amusing.

"Queen's Arms, Newgate St., April 9th, 1834.

"We arrived safe last night, after experiencing a most bitter cold ride (from Nottingham). . . . I am as much delighted as surprised with London. The Bank, Lloyd's, Guildhall, and the Post Office are wonderful places—the business and busy fellows have astonished me. I think I shall never relish a country town after the metropolis. . . . The Thames and the shipping have pleased me beyond measure. . . . I could not have thought

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it possible, that there could be such a number of lawyers in the world as I saw at Gray's Inn. There must be more fishermen than fish."

In his next letter he says—

"At Drury Lane last night we saw the first appearance of the play *Sardanapalus* by Lord Byron. A view of Newstead Abbey, painted by Stanfield, formed the drop scene. Macready, Miss Tree, and Miss Philips performed."

Percy encloses a slip from the *Sun* newspaper, with criticisms, to which he draws attention, particularly the remarks on "Macready's usual startling mannerisms, and Ellen Tree's graceful and tender rendering of the gentle 'Myrrha.' The scenery is splendid, but," adds the critic, "there are too many 'sayings' and too few 'doings' in the play."

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By a curious coincidence, Mr. Crosse and I, some twenty years later, accompanied Dr. Percy and his wife to the first representation of *Sardanapalus*, when it was revived by Charles Kean at the Princess's Theatre. The play, it will be remembered, was produced with the nearest possible approach to archæological accuracy. When in preparation I had the good fortune to spend an hour with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean in the British Museum, where they were studying the Assyrian Marbles with scholarly seriousness. The night of the play was a memorable one. We had seats in the dress circle, the second or third row back, for the house was crowded. As soon as we were seated, some one behind, who was very much in the shadow, touched my husband on the shoulder, saying, "Ah, I am very glad to see you here." The familiar voice revealed

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the presence of no less a person than Faraday. Is Saul among the prophets? —Faraday at a theatre! The meeting added not a little to our enjoyment of the evening; the philosopher was as ready and as happy in his criticisms, as he was ready and lucid in explaining electro-magnetism or the theory of molecules to an audience at the Royal Institution. I know of no man whose every word in conversation was of so much value as Faraday's; and by this I mean outside of his special subjects.

Dr. Percy told me afterwards that he not unfrequently met Faraday at exhibitions and performances, where one would perhaps hardly expect to meet a man of such recluse habits; but he was in fact a keen and interested observer of mankind, his outer cognizance of things being in no way obscured by abstract thought. I think

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this was proved by his letter to the public on the occasion of the table-turning mania.

It chanced that a day or two after our evening at the theatre the Percys gave a dinner-party, at which Mr. Crosse and I were present. The conversation turned on the character of Kean's revivals at the Princess's Theatre. Some one praised the *mise en scène*, to which Douglas Jerrold immediately retorted, "Oh yes, it is all scenery and Keanery."

He never lost the opportunity of a sarcastic fling at the favourite actor of the day, and proceeded on this occasion to indulge in such ungenerous ridicule and such violent abuse of Charles Kean, that Miss Kinglake, who was present, could stand it no longer, and turning sharply upon him, said, "Mr. Douglas Jerrold, from your unbounded abuse of Mr. Kean, I can only draw the conclusion that you

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were in love with Ellen Tree, and that she refused you, preferring Charles Kean ? "

The wit was silenced for once ; he said nothing, but he turned almost livid with rage. I do not think the sympathies of the company were with him—he had gone out of his way to be ill-natured.

But this is a digression ; we must return to April, 1834, when young Percy and his brother Edmund arrived in Paris from Ostend, after a diligence journey averaging six miles an hour. This slow rate of progress had the advantage of giving them some idea of the country through which they passed. Moreover, the two brothers stopped a day at Bruges and Brussels.

In his letters *en route* John Percy expatiates on agriculture, as if he was another Arthur Young, while he remarks that the peasants look as if they had walked out of Tenier's pictures. Fresh from the

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provincial Protestantism of home, he is startled by the worldliness of religion in Catholic countries, "where it seems a mere appeal to the senses." In one of his early letters he says, "I have withstood everything and every one who has attempted to draw me out of my own course." It is only just to say that the lad kept to this straight course during the two years of his student life in Paris. He probably looked older than he was, for at the age of seventeen he had attained his full height, which was six feet four inches. His companions called him "Long John;" he told me he suffered much from the *gamins* of Paris, who asked him if he had escaped from a show, and such like drolleries. He felt his height made him conspicuous, and partly, perhaps, in consequence of this, he was to his life's end a very shy man.

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Mr. Edmund Percy had gone on for a tour in Switzerland, leaving his brother to his own resources. The letters—which would fill a small volume—now become most interesting, because so characteristic. He writes—

"Paris is a delightful and charming place—everywhere there are curiosities, paintings, engravings, antiques, and old china. I have seen some interesting prints representing the scenes in the Revolution of 1790. I have my eye on several original Rembrandt etchings, which I can get very cheap. But modesty and cleanliness are not to be found anywhere in Paris. Mr. Boden, like me, is fonder of the place than the inhabitants, who try to impose on an Englishman to the utmost of their power. Comfort is as rare as honesty."

Percy bought a recently published pamphlet on Waterloo, which proved to

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him that the national enmity was in no way diminished.

"The French take us off most terribly. We are out of their good graces, never to return therein. All this hatred is on account of Napoleon, who, tyrant as he was, the people adore."

He gives an account of a review of thirty thousand soldiers, adding—

"I saw King Louis Philippe and his sons ride through the ranks. It was a magnificent sight. But the people did not take off a hat, or raise a single cheer—indeed, the spectators were not very numerous."

Percy remarks, on several occasions, on the "utter coldness" with which the king is invariably received by the public. But he adds, "Do not expect anything of a political nature in my letters. I have no right to pass any opinion upon the pro-

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ceedings of a country in which I am a stranger."

There was a vein of Scotch caution in Percy that was curiously at variance with the rest of his intellectual equipment—it showed itself later in scientific matters, where he was so afraid of inaccuracy that he withheld the guidance of his opinion, too much sometimes. Speaking of his daily life in Paris, he says—

"The living is not good enough for any one born in the country of roast beef. . . . A smart shower of rain is a blessing to cleanse the roads. The channels are in the middle of most of the streets—there are few 'trottoirs' or causeways—without much care you would soon be run over."

On May 23rd Percy writes—

"General Lafayette was interred yesterday, and a most splendid funeral it was. All the Americans attended, as well as the

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National Guard and troops of the line. The concourse of spectators immense."

Only four years before, the same spectators saw Lafayette introduce the Duc d'Orléans, on the balcony at the Hôtel de Ville, as candidate for "a popular throne with republican institutions." A few months' experience of Louis Philippe's treachery, and Lafayette might have exclaimed with the Psalmist, "Put not your trust in princes." What a strange series of dissolving views is French history!

On July 30th Percy writes an account of the grand *fête*, on the fourth anniversary of the Revolution of 1830. After describing the review, and the appearance of the Champs Élysées, which reminded him of Goose Fair, being fitted with all kinds of amusements, he says, the "finest thing of all was the display of fireworks," adding,

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"that the tremendous roar of the cannon and bombs was deafening, while thousands of rockets ascended at once. No eruption of Vesuvius could have surpassed it." As a finale, a real thunderstorm took place, of the most vivid description, succeeded by torrents of rain. "A sight to be seen," he writes, "were the crowds of ladies, dripping wet, paddling up to their knees, through the overflowing channels of the streets."

Percy's greatest delight in Paris was the Jardin des Plantes. He takes his lodgings with a view of being within an easy walk, and goes there daily—at least, till the lectures begin. His board and lodging cost between £5 and £6 a month—altogether he calculated that £100 a year would cover his expenses in Paris. But the spirit of a collector, which early manifested itself, led him into further outlay.

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The letters indicate that expostulations came from home about his purchasing what he called "a very nice skeleton." The money should have bought a *surtout* or other garments, but the skeleton was articulated, therefore irresistible; "and how can you study osteology with verbal descriptions only?" he says.

In the autumn of 1834, Percy was fairly started in his work at the University. He had an introduction to M. Velpeau, who had just been instituted to the chair of Clinical Surgery. M. Velpeau, the son of a poor veterinary surgeon, had worked his way up, with splendid perseverance and self-denial, but now having arrived, he was wanting in regard for those still on the road. At least, he showed himself in this light to the young Englishman, perhaps because he was an Englishman. Anyhow, Percy says, "Velpeau was

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rather cool to me in his reception," and in consequence he sought for a *repondant* elsewhere.

The conduct of M. de Jussieu, Professor of Botany at the Jardin des Plantes, was very different. Percy mentions several times in his letters the very great kindness and assistance he continued to receive at his hands. This must have been Adrien de Jussieu, who succeeded his father in the professorial chair in 1826. They were a remarkable family; no less than five of their name, representing three generations, had devoted themselves to botany and mineralogy, dating from the grandfather, Antoine, who was born in 1686. His younger brother, Joseph, was a prototype of Humboldt, in the character and extent of his scientific travels. Our gardens are indepted to him for the sweet-scented heliotrope of Peru. Bernard de

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Jussieu, another brother, was perhaps the most original thinker of the family; he opposed the classification of Linnæus, preferring the *natural* order of distribution of plants, and vaguely foreshadowed Darwin's theory of evolution. In 1734 he took over from England, in his hat, the infant specimen of the cedar of Lebanon, which has now grown to be the largest and most celebrated tree of the kind in the Jardin des Plantes. This man was the great-uncle of Percy's professor. He died in 1777, but not before he had proved himself a true son of the age, for his latest work was a book called "The Friend of Humanity."

In December, 1834, being in the full swing of work, Percy writes—

"I have frequently applied myself twelve hours a day to my chemistry and mathematics. All that I feel the want

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of now, is—*Time.* I am following Baron Thénard's lectures on chemistry."

There was no one amongst his teachers, judging from Dr. Percy's remarks on the subject in later years, to whom he was so much indebted as to this distinguished man. Thénard's researches in chemistry always pointed to a practical application of the science. Improvements in all manipulative processes, of analysis, in physics, in the arts—in short, in the chemistry which enters so largely into the wants of civilization, these were the subjects of his lectures and the special object of his scientific labours.

Percy's letters reveal the vivid, absorbing, and intense interest which the student took in his work. "You could not have sent me to any place which would have delighted me," he says, "so much as Paris." And it is not only his necessary work, it

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is an all-round interest that he feels; he must get at the knowledge of things, whether in the heavens above or the waters under the earth. The German language, unknown to him, conceals certain aspects of thought, he must attack it at once; he writes imploring his father to allow him an extra forty francs a month to learn German, "for indeed it will be of the greatest service to me."

In another letter he says, "When I want relaxation, I shall study the Syriac, not only to understand, but to speak it; perhaps as a pilgrim I shall some day visit the city of desolation." There is always a mystic hand, invisible to the common herd, which beckons men of intellect and imagination back to the East!

At this particular time the work of M. de Mohl, in Oriental literature, had opened to scholars a new field of investigation

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both linguistic and ethnographic. Percy, with his responsive intellect, was in danger for a while of having the purpose of his thoughts deflected by the fascination of Eastern poetry and literature. But this new taste, leaving only a subtint of its peculiar culture on his mind, yielded to the truer vocation of his life. Some one, I forget whom, said he thanked God every morning that physics kept him from metaphysics. So it was with Percy; his letters were now full of Gay-Lussac. His experiments on the state of the atmosphere, thirteen thousand feet above the Seine, appealed to the imagination of the student, whose first great sensation of life had been the sight of "Mr. Sadler's balloon up in the clouds."

Gay-Lussac was no mere technical chemist, though we owe to him the discovery of some of the acids. His

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lectures on chemistry delighted Percy; they were bold and original in theory, touching upon the cognate laws of magnetism and electricity. He was essentially the physicist, a man who asked questions of nature all round, and whose words fructified in the minds of the listeners. Gay-Lussac, it will be remembered, was one of the martyrs of science. His death, in 1850, resulted from an injury received by an explosion, which happened to him in the course of experimenting some years before. His last words are remarkable: "C'est dommage de s'en aller; ça commence à devenir drôle."

In the summer of 1836 Percy was preparing to leave Paris, as it was arranged that he should complete his medical studies in Edinburgh. He had obtained permission from his father to make a tour in the Alps before quitting the Continent.

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His route was planned for him by his kind friend, M. de Jussieu; it was strictly a botanical and mineralogical tour, including the South of France and Switzerland. Percy had the pleasure of being accompanied by M. de Jussieu and his botanical party as far as Fontainebleau, where they all went for four days' field work: from thence he and a friend started for their three months' holiday.

There is a characteristic letter of Percy's written from Geneva towards the close of the time. He is naturally enthusiastic about "the stupendous outlines and magnificent scenery," but his collections are uppermost in his mind. "I have thirteen hundred species of plants, besides many duplicates. I have mineralogical specimens, and also insects." He asks for more money—no unusual occurrence, by the way—and he is afraid that his father will be

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angry at his exceeding the sum allowed. "Before you pronounce judgment, I must beg you to wait till you see my collections."

Passing over many interesting letters, we come to one dated November, 1836. It is Percy's first letter from Edinburgh. He reached that place, from Nottingham, after some thirty hours' travelling on the top of a coach; he was "very glad of his new waterproof cloak, for the weather was very wet." Writing of his journey, he says—

"There were no elevated and majestic mountains nor foaming torrents; yet in a political point of view I saw much to astonish and please. The appearance of the immense factories in one blaze of light, on approaching Leeds, was curious, and at the same time interesting, for it is to these and to like extensive establishments that the prosperity of our nation is owing."

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Established in Edinburgh for two years, Percy devoted himself heart and soul to his professional work; at the same time he enjoyed the social pleasure of being among men of congenial tastes. In his letters we hear of his dining out six days in succession. Amongst his friends were David Forbes, of "glacial theory" renown, and Edward Forbes, the distinguished young naturalist, who, like Percy, had begun to be collector at the age of seven. Dr. Robert Graham, the distinguished botanical professor, was one of the first to welcome Percy to Scotland. He much wished his young friend to accompany him on a three weeks' botanical tour in Ireland, but time did not permit of the invitation being accepted.

Sir Charles Bell, one of the greatest anatomists of the day, singled out John Percy for his special commendation in

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reference to his pathological studies, including his "Thesis on the Brain," and for work he did while clinical clerk at the infirmary. The writer had the pleasure, many years later, of meeting the widow of Sir Charles Bell, who well recollected Dr. Percy as a guest at her house during his student days in Edinburgh. Lady Bell mentioned having requested John Percy's signature on the page of an album that she kept for the autographs of young men who showed promise of future distinction. Almost without exception, the "celebrities by anticipation" justified the wisdom that had guided their selection.

John Percy—"M.D." after all—left Edinburgh in 1838 with flying colours, having passed most satisfactory examinations, and having gained many prizes in his academical career. Events followed fast. In the summer of 1839 Dr. Percy

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married his cousin Grace, only child and heiress of John E. Piercy, Esq., of Warley Hall, near Birmingham. The young couple took up their residence in that town, where Percy had been elected physician to the Queen's Hospital. He never entered on any general practice, but he made some researches in physiology and pathology, which were of some medical value. It was not long, however, before he turned to the real work of his life—metallurgy. In 1846 he was working with David Forbes and Miller of Cambridge, on the constituents of crystallized slags, a matter of curious interest from a mineralogical point of view. In his last presidential address, forty years later, Dr. Percy refers to the unsolved problem of the appearance of silica in the slag of iron-blast furnaces. He had recently received what he characterized

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as "a superb specimen, more valuable" to him "than a mass of gold of equal weight." He adds, "The sight of it affords me delight. I often look at this specimen, and every time with increasing pleasure."

In 1851 Dr. Percy removed to London. He had said when a lad it was the only place to live in, and his wishes were now realized. He had been chosen Lecturer on Metallurgy in the Government School of Mines, only recently instituted, though this technical and special system of instruction had long been a crying want in a country whose national wealth depends so much on its mineral resources.

Dr. Percy was not long in making his mark among the scientists of the day; and among his contemporaries were included men of the foremost rank in science. Faraday was in his prime, and after a

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reverent pause we may recall the names of Buckland, Sedgwick, Murchison, Hopkins, Lyell, David Forbes, and Andrew Ramsay, in geology; while in other branches of physics, the lists are equally full and not less important. It was the period when Wheatstone and others were linking the uttermost ends of the earth together by electricity; from the Continent science had received from the discoverers, Bunsen and Kirchhoff, the star-testing spectrum analysis; and above all, Darwin had started his great revolution in science. Certainly the decade following the Exhibition of 1851 was in many ways remarkable for its achievements and for its initiative. The world of science is somewhat *blasé* now; it has done so much, and learnt so much of the philosophy of heaven and earth, that one is somehow reminded of what Wellington

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said to the priggish young duke who thought he had fathomed infinity. "D— it, my lord, you have been educated beyond your mind."

It is anyhow pleasant to look back at the freshness that belonged to science and society in the "Fifties." No one enjoyed all this with a keener zest than did Dr. Percy, who rejoiced at being established in London, where he had always wished to reside. Possessed of ample means, and equally rich in social qualities, his house in Craven Hill became the frequent meeting-place of a very agreeable and a very well-*mixed* circle. Dr. Percy had, amongst other varieties, many artistic friends. He was intimate with all the Landseers, with Boxall, Leech, Elmore, Solomon Hart, Miss Durant, and indeed was more or less well acquainted with most of the R.A.'s. Mr. Fergusson, author of the

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"History of Architecture," was his frequent companion; they were often seen dining together at the Athenæum. Faraday was no diner out, but Percy was intimately associated with him in scientific matters, and to this distinguished friend he dedicated his work on metallurgy.

The Percys rarely gave large dinner-parties, they preferred as a rule to see their friends by bits. Their small Sunday dinners were very pleasant—just three or four guests—people worth listening to, or exchanging ideas with, during a quiet evening. On these occasions Dr. Percy's friends had the opportunity of examining some of the illustrated works in his library, or of seeing some rare specimen lately added to his minerals or his butterflies. No man hardly had such varied tastes in collecting, and, it must be added, few had such competent knowledge of each and

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every subject. One time we would have down Gavarni's "caricatures," which were always much praised by the artists present for the admirable *technique* of the figure-drawing. They are rather Hogarthian in coarseness of subject; but not so are Gavarni's illustrations of Eugene Sue's "Wandering Jew." Then, as a change, we would look over Gould's superb work on "Birds," the ornithologist himself standing by and giving us a running commentary on these lovely birds and their habitat. Mr. Gould was a delightful companion; I retain a vivid recollection of his describing his natural history explorations on the Himalaya Mountains; he was at once so simple and so picturesque in narrative. Boxall and Elmore were very agreeable men to meet *en petit comité.* The former I remember telling some delightful stories of his student days in Rome. Boxall had

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a beautiful voice; his words were uttered with so musical a cadence, that at times it sounded like poetry, added to which his reminiscences were tinged with a sympathetic melancholy. Elmore, too, was a man of great refinement and culture. As long ago as 1839, he had painted the "Martyrdom of Becket" for Daniel O'Connell. When I met him first, he was painting a subject suggested by a passage in Pepys's Diary. Of course Dr. Percy got down his copy of the prince of gossips to read a favourite passage here and there.

Mr. Douglas Jerrold liked a larger audience than was afforded by the Sunday dinners. He was generally asked to the Percys' larger parties. On one occasion the eternal Irish question was being talked about, when he remarked with admirable point, that "the Irish labourer tickled the

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land with a hoe, and expected it to blossom into harvest." To this some one responded by quoting a saying of Kinglake's, that "human nature is the same everywhere except in Ireland."

Humour, the amalgam of genius, was distinctly present in Percy's composition. He was not given to *bon mots* himself, but he delighted in those of others, especially of his friend Charles Landseer. The latter had a pun ready both in season and out of season; sometimes he said really good things in the manner of Theodore Hook, but his humour was too burlesque to be always welcome. If Charles Landseer had passed an examination as a retailer of gossip, he would have taken honours. Then we used to meet Charles Knight, whose very name suggests useful knowledge. Douglas Jerrold once called him "good (K)night," though he was the last

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of your guests to whom you would wish to say these parting words.

It was at Dr. Percy's table, if I remember rightly, that Jerrold flashed out that happy definition, that "dogmatism was puppyism come to maturity." Percy's manner in argument was rather that of the sledge-hammer sort—no man could better cleave in two some pedestal-mounting hypocrisy or solemn sham. He had, besides, a good stock of honest indignation always on the simmer; it required very little extra fuel to make him boil over, and then, ye gods, he was grand, he was delightful; the more so, that not unfrequently his seeming wrath would explode in a hearty laugh. It was not of course generally known, but for many years Dr. Percy contributed frequent "letters" to the *Times*, on subjects of the day. The initiated knew his general signature of "Y." It was an American

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who said, "When the *Times* takes snuff, all England sneezes."

Amongst others of Percy's friends who have passed away, and therefore may be mentioned, was Samuel Lucas, an excellent talker, a man of rare and varied culture. He was for some while literary reviewer for the *Times*. He was the first to discover in "East Lynne" the merits of Mrs. Henry Wood as a good story-teller. Lucas was very fond of attending Christie and Manson's sales, and had collected quite a mass of historical literature about the interesting and valuable things that had passed through their hands. He said that, looking back at the catalogues of about 1828 and two or three succeeding years, the prices then given, and thought good, were so far below what the same things would fetch thirty years later, that it showed the greatly increasing value of all

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property connected with the Fine Arts. In 1832 a fine example of Gainsborough was sold for £131 5*s.*; a landscape by Wynants for £100; Stothard's "Canterbury Pilgrimage" for 150 guineas; and seventy-one exquisite enamels by Henry Bone, R.A., only fetched £258 6*s.* The last-named lot would probably now command the sum ten times over. The sale in 1891 of Dr. Percy's own collection of water-colour drawings, representing the history of the art from the commencement of the eighteenth century, fully bears out the increasing value of works of art. Mac-Kenzie's "Jews' House, Lincoln," fetched 210 guineas. I believe Dr. Percy gave 60 guineas for this drawing when the Ellison collection was dispersed. Proving how closely Dr. Percy had judged the value of his collection, it had been insured of late years for £7000. The sum realized

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at the sale was £8230. He had added several examples of leading artists within a very short time of his death.

But to return to earlier years. In 1859, being still resident in Somersetshire, I received many very interesting letters from Dr. Percy. Some were written in a playful mood of downright boyish fun, for he was very fond of teasing friends with whom he was really intimate. These letters, written at moments of leisure, were frequently illustrated by inimitable pen-and-ink sketches. My sister and I were frequently Mrs. Percy's guests in London for two or three weeks at a time, and the sketches often referred to humorous incidents that we had laughed over and enjoyed together; caricatures of himself and his wife, fanciful problems, "an enigma," or a psychical assay. It is impossible to reproduce the humour and

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fun of a bygone day: as well might we look to the register of the thermometer to make us feel the genial warmth of summers long ago!

In a more serious vein my correspondent had sketched the setting sun, the symbol of the Christian faith triumphant, reptiles in the foreground stuck through with arrows, the foul fiend himself transfixed with a spear to the earth, a raven sitting on a skull, a man gibbeted, a village church in the distance, the legend of the problem being the "the best sermon—true sorrow."

In one of these letters Dr. Percy writes—

"A true friend I will indeed grapple with hooks of steel! I began life with the largest heart, and the fullest belief in man; but meeting with more than one example of the basest ingratitude, my

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heart became contracted and my belief weakened. . . . When I meet a minister of the Church, whom I find a worthy one, I respect him intensely, although I may on matters *incapable of demonstration* be disposed to differ with him. . . . I am much obliged to you for the information respecting the Roman coin. Pray look to it yourself and ascertain whether it really was *imbedded* in the slag. . . . I knew a man—intimately I may say—who realized the truth of your remarks concerning the three phases of faith in human nature. The last phase, he tells me, is hardly yet passed through; but there is reason to believe it will be one of *revived*—never dead—faith in human nature. Circumstances had wellnigh annihilated that faith—still a germ remained . . . and now shows signs, not only of vitality, but of vigorous growth. . . . I think you

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have some knowledge of the individual, but as he has forbidden me to disclose his name you must supply the omission by divination. . . . I agree with you heartily in your abhorrence of mere fashionable life. . . . I do not object to true polish, but that is innate. Polish must come out from *within*, and cannot be plastered on, Day and Martin fashion, from *without*. . . . I do not agree with your view of sympathy. I believe that true sympathy essentially depends on oneness of thought, taste, and feeling, not in contrasts."

I believe I had suggested complementary qualities as being desirable in friendship and in married life; a very happy couple known to me are described as "ballast and sail."

In a letter written from Swansea, Dr. Percy says—

"I am very much pleased with my

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journey to these parts. The scenery is quite to my taste, as *all* scenery is. I see occasionally the Devonshire hills very plainly, and then I think of the many pleasant hours I have passed at Lynton."

Dr. Percy was very fond of sketching from nature; some of his water-colour drawings done at Lynton are remarkable for their truth of colouring and minuteness of detail. Every plant in the foreground, and even the lichen on the stones, could be classified. He attempted modelling in clay from life studies, but with indifferent success.

The letter continues—

"I perceive in the *Times* of yesterday a criticism on Tennyson's last work. One quotation contains a line to the effect that 'unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.' I will not say that I go this length entirely; that would be too bad. . . . I

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don't believe with Hogarth, that genius is nothing but industry, though I do believe that genius is nothing *without* it. . . . My own impression is that human happiness is much more equally diffused than is commonly supposed. One must always bear in mind that the capacity of pain increases in direct proportion to that of pleasure. . . . Do not, I pray you, be too ready to avail yourself of physical illustrations, such as that of polarity. I anticipated that you would in your reply employ that image. Forbes got into a terrible scrape when he attempted to apply it to geology. You will see the announcement of my work on metallurgy in the last number of the *Quarterly Review.* I have a great deal yet to do in the way of descriptive writing, as you may well suppose."

The first volume of Dr. Percy's work

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was not published till 1861. There had been some delay in bringing it out. The designers and printers said that "he was the very devil for accuracy." As a matter of fact, the woodcut illustrations had often to be done over and over again before he was satisfied. He wished them to be useful as working models. Though technical in detail, Dr. Percy's book is philosophical in theory, and even the non-scientific reader may skip the practical parts, and find much curious and interesting matter. The second and most important volume of the series appeared in 1864, the subject being "Iron and Steel." As a survey of this branch of our national resources, the work stands alone; for the literature of metallurgy had hitherto remained untouched, till Dr. Percy took up the task of compiling all that had been said and done in this matter. He had to

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cull his materials from all parts of the world, in a variety of languages, from records and monographs buried in the "Transactions" of learned or technical societies, both of England and the Continent. And, above all, he collected orally in mining districts, at great iron-works, and from artisans, a mass of necessary evidence in practical matters. The work is a monument of patient research. Its value was at once acknowledged in France and Germany, where translations of the whole series very shortly appeared.

In treating metallurgy in its historical aspect, Dr. Percy's literary and antiquarian tastes came to his aid. He disputes the theory that the age of Bronze preceded that of Iron, on account of the greater simplicity of smelting iron direct from the ore, compared with the manu-

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facture of bronze. As we know, Dr. Livingstone found the African tribes on the Zambesi well acquainted with the ore of iron, making it by the simple process described by Mungo Park. A Birmingham manufacturer found the African-made iron highly carbonized, and when chilled it had the properties of steel. This would seem to be an unconscious anticipation of the Bessemer process; at any rate, the savages make such good iron that they consider ours "rotten" by comparison.

Dr. Percy shows how much we have been indebted to foreigners for the development of our mineral resources. In the Middle Ages Germans and Hungarians were granted powers to work mines in the north of England and to set up manufactures—notably that of pins. English pins came to be held in great

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estimation; and in the days when they were still a costly appendage to a lady's toilette, the expression of "a wife's pin-money" came into common usage. Dr. Percy remarks on the wisdom of Queen Elizabeth, who greatly encouraged foreign miners and metallurgists. In 1555 a German, calling himself Agricola, wrote a remarkable book in Latin on "Metals." Dr. Percy mentions this treatise with respect, and dwells on the fact that it is full of curious engravings illustrating the mining tools and old dresses of the miners, etc.

"Ours is emphatically the Iron age," says our author. "No other element has contributed so largely to the civilization and happiness, and, may we not also add, paradoxically as it may seem, to the misery of mankind."

The history of inventors is generally more or less sad; they so rarely reap the

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harvest of their labour. Dr. Percy tells at some length the story of Henry Cort, "the saddest in the annals of invention." He died an utterly ruined man, being unable to assert his right to the discovery that produced a new era in iron manufacture. There are many instances recorded in these volumes of devoted assiduity to working out new methods. Early in the eighteenth century Abraham Darby experimented on the use of coke, instead of charcoal, hitherto deemed necessary for iron furnaces. He watched his fires for six days and nights, without leaving for meals or taking any regular rest. When at last, after many disappointments, the experiment succeeded, and the iron ran out well, he fell asleep on the bridge house on the top of the furnace, and his men, unable to wake him, carried him home.

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Dr. Percy gives a graphic account of the Bessemer process, as he saw it in operation in the experimental stage in 1856.

"I never witnessed," he says, "any metallurgical process more startling and impressive. After the blast was turned on, all proceeded quietly for a time, when a volcano-like eruption of flame and sparks suddenly occurred, and bright red-hot scoriæ and cinders were forcibly ejected. . . . After a few minutes all was again tranquil, and the molten malleable iron was tapped off."

To scientific critics must be left the task of apportioning the merit due to Dr. Percy's teaching in respect to certain improvements in the Bessemer process. Dr. Percy received the Bessemer gold medal of the Iron and Steel Institute in 1877.

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Dr. Percy had none of the ordinary Englishman's love of sport. I have heard him express a dislike to the frequent introduction of dead game in Landseer's pictures; as a matter of fact, he never fired off a gun in his life, and I do not think that he ever mounted a horse. It was curious that, loving beautiful scenery and caring for architecture, antiquities, and works of art in general, he should have travelled so little. After his marriage, with the exception of a visit to Spain to examine some mines, Dr. Percy never again went abroad. He talked of an expedition to the Pyrenees, and wanted us to join his wife and himself in the tour, but it never came off, for indeed he lacked physical energy somewhat. When impelled by circumstances to make a journey he always enjoyed it; even as recently as 1885, the

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meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute at Glasgow gave him great pleasure. As President, he had to be there, and joined heart and soul in the excursions, which delighted and refreshed him immensely. With a touch of the humour of old days, he remarked upon Scottish hospitality during these excursions, "The blood of the grape flowed freely, and so did the spirit of barley," adding, "Notwithstanding the prevalent notion that the inhabitants of the genial South are less able to contend with the products of fermentation than those of the more rigorous North, yet the former showed no disinclination to test the truth of that notion by experiments upon themselves."

In 1874 Dr. Percy deserted his favourite sea-place—Tenby—to spend the autumn at Llanfairfechan. Here we spent some weeks under the same roof with the

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Percys, and greatly enjoyed our daily intercourse with the man of science, who happily knew so well how to talk delightful nonsense, and be very much like ordinary mortals—only more so. He was a tyrant about walks; one had to go the way he wanted, and stop, whether in sun or shade, till stones were cracked, or ferns and mosses carefully bestowed in their tin box, or a beetle hunted up.

When on these country walks, the "Collector-General," as we called him, cut rather a droll figure. He had a wallet slung over his back, besides the tin herbal aforesaid, a field-glass, a large geological hammer in his hand, while he shouldered a green net for butterfly catching. He stalked along, sometimes considerably in advance of us, specially when going uphill, for his legs were terribly long, and so it happened that we came in occa-

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sionally for the remarks of the passers-by, such as, "Well, he's a queer chap to look at; he's as tall as a church steeple, and might pass for a pedlar."

Dr. Percy could not understand people being without special interests. He turned to his young nieces one day and asked them what they collected. When they replied, rather meekly, being in dread of his rough manner, that they did not make any collections, he exclaimed quite fiercely, "Stupid girls!"

Dr. Percy's language at times, indeed, could be decidedly forcible; when on the subject of the culpable waste and misuse of our stores of coal, his indignation knew no bounds. Against "shallow humanitarians" he was extremely severe: he would have agreed most thoroughly with the recent utterance of a witty bishop, who said, "The wise people are occu-

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pied in undoing the work of the good people."

Dr. Percy remarked on the empiric character of the age—an age which he denounced "as rampant in quackery of every kind." This remark was in special allusion to trade unions, which he regarded with much disfavour as interfering with the individual liberty, not merely of the capitalist, but also in a higher degree with that of the workman himself.

One of Percy's emphatic sayings, uttered now many years since, had reference, I remember, to a somewhat pugnacious philosopher. "That man," he said, "has always got his fist doubled up in the face of God Almighty."

When Sir Henry Holland published his "Recollections of a Past Life," Dr. Percy raised a laugh against the author at the Athenæum, by asking him if he could

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have "recollections of a future life." I am told by those who remember the time when he was a very regular attendant at the club, that there was no one more welcome than Dr. Percy in the Athenæum smoking-room, for he was allowed on all hands to be "such a capital talker."

At one time Dr. Percy saw a great deal of Mr. Nasmyth, who invented the wonderful hammer which, like a hero of romance, united gentleness with strength. Nasmyth, the son and nephew of distinguished painters, had himself an artistic side to his character, with which the metallurgist sympathized greatly, admiring his delicate pen-and-ink sketches with a fellow-draughtsman's zest. I remember well a very pleasant expedition to Woolwich with Dr. Percy, to see the working of the great hammer, when Mr. Nasmyth told us that when he had

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realized £50,000, he considered that he had enough for one man, and declined any further remunerative business. This was sentiment after Dr. Percy's own heart.

These were busy years. Few men lived so full a life as Dr. Percy. Besides his laboratory work at the Museum of Geology, he held the office of Lecturer of Metallurgy to the advanced class of Artillery officers at Woolwich. He served a long list of Royal Commissions of departmental inquiries, and for many years he was superintendent of the ventilation, warming, and lighting of the Houses of Parliament. Dr. Percy always took great pleasure in his course of lectures to working men. It was very interesting to see the theatre of the Jermyn Street Museum filled with an attentive audience of this special course. He said the working men were, as a body, the most intelligent

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listeners to whom he lectured anywhere. I remember his saying that it was a great mistake to suppose that it was necessary to lecture down to them. At the time of his death, or rather up to the time of his illness, he had been working at the rarer metals — nickel, bismuth, and antimony. The last public position that Dr. Percy filled was that of President of the Iron and Steel Institute in 1885. His address, delivered on the 12th of May, 1886, is extremely interesting and very characteristic. His scientific convictions remain unaltered—it is still to the physico-chemical investigations that he looks for our present ignorance of phenomena being dispelled. He throws out with a caution befitting the philosophic mind the idea that "what we call iron may not after all prove to be a single element in the chemical sense of that

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term." With the old enthusiasm for his subject, he remarks, "The history of the metallurgic arts is involved in the history of the civilization of man." And then, remembering the glamour of Oriental literature in his student days in Paris, he says—

"The processes of these arts, as practised among Eastern nations, have always had a peculiar charm for me. In India there were, I doubt not, expert practical metallurgists when our forefathers painted themselves with woad, and used chipped flints for arrowheads."

In 1866 Dr. Percy had removed from Craven Hill to Gloucester Crescent, Bayswater. He required a larger house for his collections, which had always a tendency to outgrow ordinary limits. In the work of preserving his valuable curiosities and specimens in order, and free from the

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invasion of London blacks, he was greatly assisted by his able and intelligent butler. "Richard" was a familiar figure to all the Percys' friends. I remember a colleague of the doctor's saying to me, "I have just met Percy, who is as cross as twelve bears." Now the multiple was perhaps rather excessive, but our dear friend had his *ursa major* moods, on which occasion Richard, who knew everything from A to Z, formed an excellent buffer, wisely using his discretionary power to save his master from worry by sending away importunate visitors and the like. Richard Hardy survives (1892) his master after no less than sixty years of faithful service in the family.

Dr. Percy lost his beloved wife in 1880. She had been a great invalid for many years, and in consequence they had withdrawn very much from general society. After her death he became more than

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ever of a recluse, being now rarely seen either at the Athenæum or Garrick clubs. It is worthy of remark that in these years he took up a new study—conchology—and made a valuable collection of shells.

In his last illness Dr. Percy was affectionately nursed for many months by his favourite niece, Miss Ada Percy. This lady has told me of the very great interest he took at the last in hearing about the condition of his old friend and teacher, Chevreul, the famous French chemist. Born in 1786, this distinguished centenarian seems to belong to ancient history. He died only a few weeks before his former pupil himself passed away. Chevreul's death was attributed to a cold caught in ascending the Eiffel Tower, the building of which had interested him greatly.

Dr. Percy, on the very day of his death,

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the 19th of June, 1889, received the intimation that the Albert Medal of the Society of Arts had been conferred upon him. His answer was, "My work is done!"

The Percy collections have all been disposed of at prices that endorse the judgment of the collector. The metallurgical specimens went to the South Kensington Museum. The drawings, minerals, shells, philosophical instruments, books, engravings, etc., have been dispersed; but Dr. Percy's manuscript "Catalogue, with Notes" of the water-colour drawings was bought for £50 by the British Museum.

END OF VOL. I.

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